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THE NEW YORKER

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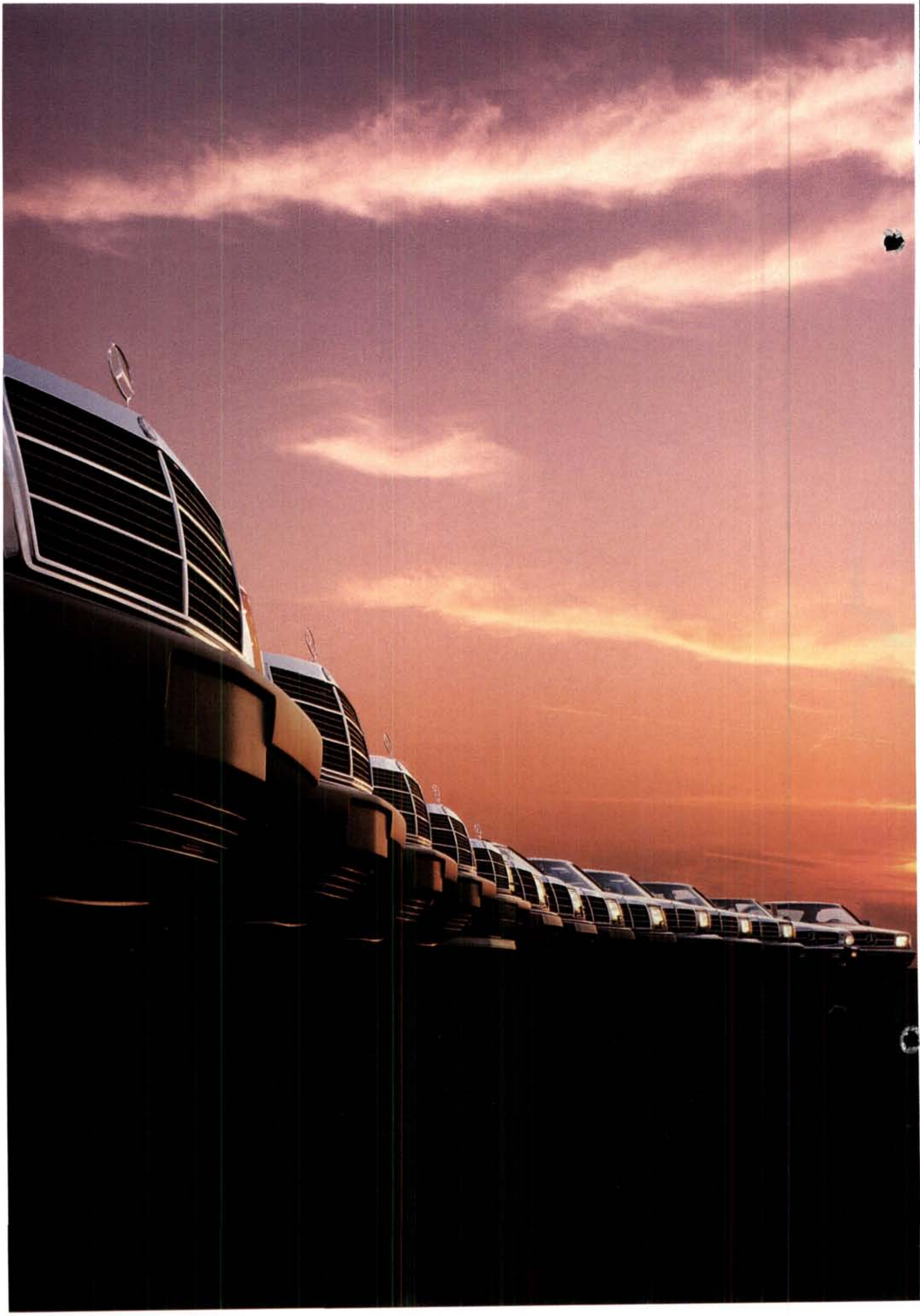

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

YOU walk down the stairs of the Village Gate, where the fifties musical "Prom Queens Unchained" has just opened. Before you can set foot in the theatre, however, some Cerberus thrusts a brown paper bag into your hand. You mutter a polite "thank you" and are about to open the thing up when your attention is drawn to a note on the sack's side. It's a "reminder" from "Mom," which, among other things, admonishes, "Better not eat this until lunchtime. I'm tired of getting calls from the principal." This isn't the first piece of paper you receive during the evening ("Prom Queens" offers more flyers than an amble down Fifth Avenue), just the wittiest. Enjoined by Mom from eating, you take your table and begin drinking—vodka martinis. You know that participatory shows like this are merely window dressing for liquor sales, and that alcohol won't go very well with what's in the bag, but what the heck. When you're allowed to eat, late in the first act, you're amazed at how well vodka *does* complement peanut butter and devil's food.

The devil's food, and the show's high-school-caf setting, have a Proustian effect. You begin thinking about your own high school, which wasn't anything like the one depicted here. About the only thing you can relate to, in fact, is a reference somebody makes to a "food stylist." You doubt that they had stylists of any sort back in 1959; you let it pass. You get on better with the music, by Keith Herrmann. All right, so it's not "Carrie," but at least it has an authentic fifties sound. The lyrics, by Larry Goodsight, are considerably less innocent: "nocturnal emission supplier" would never have made it into "Bye Bye Birdie." The stock characters are also a little too tarted-up. The contestants for prom queen, for example, are shamelessly seventies: the hoody girl (Sandra Purpuro) is a dominatrix; the fat girl (Dana Ertischek) wants to "go all the way"; and the head cheerleader (Connie Ogden) is more Sandra Duncan than Sandra Dee. Despite the lack of authenticity, you end up having an O.K. time. You especially admire the performance of Kathy Morath (as the mother of one of the contestants); the costumes (by Robert Strong Miller); and the makeup, which, in at least one case (that of the prom king, played by the appealing young actor James Heatherly), was by Benjamin Moore.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

A Rendezvous with God—Avi Hoffman stars in Miriam Hoffman's play, with music, about the Yiddish poet Itsik Manger. In previews. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Language of the Soul—A new musical starring Cheryl Alexander. Previews through July 9. Opens July 10 at 8:30. (Theatre Arielle, 432 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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OPENED RECENTLY

Alice '91—An adaptation of Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking-Glass," which was written by David S. Macy and Susan B. Reinhard. Presented by the Kings County Shakespeare Company. (Concert Grove, Prospect Park, Brooklyn. July 6-7 at 2. No tickets necessary.)

And the World Goes 'Round: The Songs of Kander & Ebb—A musical revue, with Bob Cuccioli, Karen Mason, Brenda Pressley, Jim Walton, and Karen Ziëmba. Starting July 9, Joel Blum takes over for Jim Walton. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

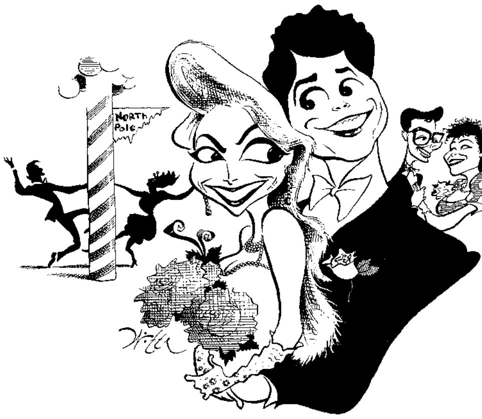
Body and Soul—David Boldt and Randall Denman have the leads in John Glines' gay romantic comedy. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 869-3530.)

Breaking Legs—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia can seldom have been funnier than as a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Nicolas Surovy, and, above all, Sue Giosa as the daughter who spins the plot. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Charge It, Please—A comedy by Carlos Gorbea. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

Circle Repertory Company—The final play of the season is **THE BALCONY SCENE**, by Wil Calhoun. With Jonathan Hogan, Cynthia Nixon, and William Fichtner. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Getting Married—A production of Shaw's comedy, with Victoria Tennant, Lee Richardson, Nicolas Coster, and Linda Thorson. Directed by Stephen Porter. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)



Connie Ogden and James Heatherly in "Prom Queens Unchained"

Gypsy—The Tyne Daly-led revival of the great Laurents-Styne-Sondheim musical has returned to Broadway for a limited engagement. It is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). (12/4/89) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Hamlet—The group called A Matinée Idyll presents free performances of Shakespeare's tragedy. (Cherry Hill Fountain, Central Park, near W. 72nd St. July 5 at 5. . . . ¶ Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Riverside Park, Riverside Dr. at 89th St. July 6-7 at 5.)

The Haunted Host and **Safe Sex**—A double bill consisting of a 1964 comedy by Robert Patrick and a revised 1987 comedy by Harvey Fierstein. Mr. Fierstein and Jason Workman make up the cast of both plays. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Closes July 14.)

Lips Together, Teeth Apart—Christine Baranski, Anthony Heald, Swoosie Kurtz, and Nathan Lane in a new play by Terrence McNally. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes July 21.)

Lost in Yonkers—There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when *a cowering, pathetic man has* [illegible] leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Love Lemmings—A satirical comedy revue by Joe DiPietro. With Steve Ahern, John Daggett, Helen Greenberg, and Kathryn Rossetter. Directed by Melia Bensussen. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Lusting After Pipino's Wife—A comedy by Sam Henry Kass. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 564-8038.)

Mambo Mouth—John Leguizamo portrays seven Hispanic characters in a one-man show. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Mines, Watermelons, Low-Fat, and Jesus—The collective title for six ten-minute plays, all directed by Bill Shebar. (Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art, 44 Walker St. 431-7434. Closes July 3.)

Miss Saigon—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

Mr. Gogol and Mr. Preen—Elaine May's play about the relationship between an aging New York writer (Mike Nussbaum) and a vacuum-cleaner salesman (William H. Macy) is sweet, funny, and poignant. It shows the two actors at their best and is rather like a "Road" movie, with Nussbaum and Macy as Bing and Bob, and Zohra Lampert as a sort of *mitteleuropäische* Dorothy Lamour. Instead of being about sex and show business, the jokes here are about philosophy, politics, and the problem of definitions. (6/24/91) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Othello—The first of three plays in the New York Shakespeare Festival's free summer series in the Park. Raul Julia, Christopher Walken, Mary Beth Hurt, and Kathryn Meisle lead the cast. Directed by Joe Dowling. (Delacorte, Central Park near W. 81st St. Closes July 14. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

Pageant—A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

Prom Queens Unchained—A musical by Larry Goodsight, Keith Herrmann, and Stephen Witkin. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Red Scare on Sunset—Charles Busch wrote and stars in this comedy about an actress battling Communism in nineteen-fifties Hollywood. Directed by Kenneth Elliott. Also with Julie Halston, Arnie Kolodner, Andy Halliday, Ralph Buckley, Judith Hansen, Mark Hamilton, and Roy Cockrum. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

The Secret Garden—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Song of Singapore—A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent (led by the winsome and versatile Donna Murphy) cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of

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excruciatingly bad jokes. Another problem: on a busy night the seating arrangements here can be extremely cramped. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)

State Theatre of Lithuania—Presenting **the square,** a collaborative work by Eimuntas Nekrosius and the company. In Lithuanian, with simultaneous English translation. (Joyce, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Closes July 7.)

The Subject Was Roses—A faithful revival of Frank Gilroy's bleak play about a Bronx couple named Cleary, on the weekend, in 1946, when their son returns from the Army. The actors are John Mahoney, Dana Ivey, and Patrick Dempsey, and they are first-rate. Jack Hofsiss directed. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes July 7.)

The Will Rogers Follies—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging, amusing Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

LONG RUNS

cats: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **city of angels:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.) . . . **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **forbidden broadway 1991½:** A source of continual merriment, this newly revised revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **forever plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **grand hotel:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **jackie mason: brand new:** The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.) . . . **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **once on this island:** A musical by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **the phantom of the opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **six degrees of separation:** You're best off knowing nothing about the John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **the sum of us:** David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

DANCE

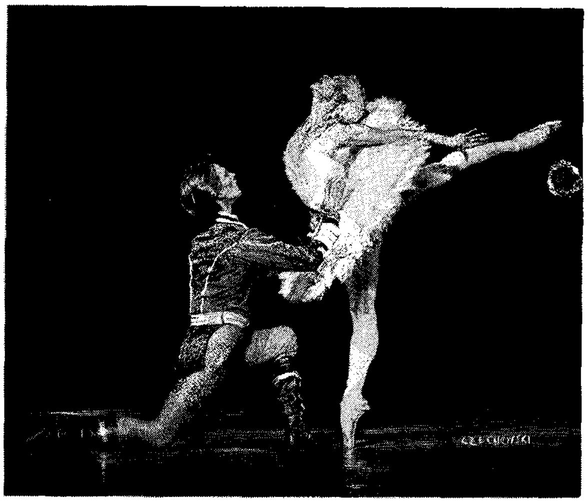
WHEN people think of the Nicholas Brothers—if they think of them at all—they tend to classify them as a "flash act"; that is, as specialists in acrobatic stunts performed for a big (and largely empty) effect. Certainly, the brothers knew how to steal the show. If you've seen the routines that Nick Castle arranged for them in "Down Argentine Way" or "Stormy Weather"—with the jumps into split landings, down a giant staircase, which were performed by the brothers in white tie and tails—you've seen flash that has died and gone to Heaven. Still, there is a lot more to Fayard Nicholas, now in his seventies, and his brother Harold, about seven years his junior. They are great tap dancers—by which we mean that they are masters of timing and ministers of grace. They are also monuments to perseverance. Harold, still an excellent singer and a remarkable dancer, continues to perform, and is even capable of the occasional split. Fayard has recovered from double hip-replacement surgery, and although splits are now out for him, he is back tap dancing.

We learned this, and much else about the brothers, from Bruce Goldstein, the director of repertory programming at Film Forum, who is currently involved in making a documentary about the dancers. He spoke to us as we looked at film clips of the Nicholas Brothers in action, from musical pictures of the early thirties through blaxploitation films from the mid-seventies. The clips are part of a special Nicholas Brothers tribute that Mr. Goldstein first produced at Film Forum in 1988, and that will be repeated—with some new prints and newly discovered curiosities—on July 8. For that program Mr. Goldstein will also be screening an entire 1942 feature, called "Orchestra Wives," starring the Glenn Miller orchestra and featuring the Nicholas Brothers in a number called "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo." There Harold performs a double air turn into a split, Fayard tags a wall with his foot and comes down into a split, and Harold runs clear up the wall, rocketing off it into a back flip to land in a still more stretched-out split. Ten years later, movie audiences would discover Donald O'Connor's madcap version of the same stunt in the "Make 'Em Laugh" number of "Singin' in the Rain." But Harold was there first, and with elegance.

IN TOWN

Royal Ballet—Opening performances of a two-week engagement that will run through July 20. July 8 at 7:30 and July 9 at 8: "Swan Lake." . . . ¶ July 10 at 8: "Scènes de Ballet," "Winter Dreams" (American première), and " 'Still Life' at the Penguin Café" (New York première). (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Ralph Lemon—With his company in two contemporary works. Also on the bill are Muna Tseng and dancers. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 5 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)



Robert Hill and Darcey Bussell in the Royal Ballet's "Swan Lake"

"Full Circle"—The first of two programs of contemporary dance that benefit Women in Need features Stephan Koplowitz, Gina Gibney, Carol Clements, the Urban Bush Women, and Molissa Fenley. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. July 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 695-4758.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow—The Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, July 2-3. . . . ¶ The Trisha Brown Company, July 5-6. . . . ¶ The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, July 9-13. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

WHAT started out long ago as the British Invasion has by now become a virtual occupation, with each new wave of U.K. trendsetters finding perked-up ears over here. Two imports who have lately been making noise in the press—the La's and Birdland—will bring their message to New York's stages in the next week or so. The La's, who perform at the Marquee on July 10, come from Liverpool, and, judging from their highly lauded recent début album, they have studied well at the feet of that city's most famous sons. Comparisons to the Beatles are often as facile as the phrase "R.E.M.-style guitars"—especially now that allegiance to the sixties has become a litmus test for many pop bands—but the La's really do show traces of the early Fab Four's transcendent pop charm, not to mention echoes of the Kinks, the Who, Paul Revere and the Raiders, and the Animals (the group's lead singer, Lee Mavers, sounds like a less impassioned Eric Burdon). The band walks a fine line between originality and meticulous revivalism—their album's production (which band members have railed against in interviews) strives for sixties authenticity, with acoustic guitar, reverb-steeped electric guitar, and percussive touches like claves. But if the group is derivative, at least they grave-rob with style: they take a

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SKIN SUPPLIES FOR MEN

catalogue of sixties-pop inventions and reshape them into something fresh.

Birdland, who perform at Maxwell's on July 7, are roughly contemporaries of the La's, but their icons are of a later generation; their début album, "Birdland," is firmly anchored in late-seventies punk, from both London (the Sex Pistols, Generation X, early Echo and the Bunnymen) and New York (the Ramones, Patti Smith). The sound is raw and unstudied—stripped-down guitars, sneering vocals. On their album cover, the band members—four peroxide-blond, mop-topped fellows who look like a windowful of Brian Jones mannequins—are wrapped in an American flag, looking pouty and stoned. In interviews, they come across as anarchistic bad boys; onstage, they've earned a reputation as equipment trashers. The band has swallowed the punk aesthetic whole, but so far they've succeeded more in recycling the era than in taking off from it.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slightly decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. July 4-6 and July 9-13, the club belongs to former "Saturday Night Live" comic **TERRY SWEENEY,** who'll be doing his now famous Nancy Reagan impersonation in a show called "It's Still My Turn." The evening ends with Sweeney's Nancy singing new lyrics to "Rose's Turn," from "Gypsy." **NATALIE CARTER** appears on July 7. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? As of July 2, the stage will be held by **EDDIE PALMIERI** and his Afro-Cuban Jazz Ensemble, who'll be sharing the bill with the **HILTON RUIZ** quintet. **HERBIE MANN AND JASIL BRAZZ,** with guest Dori Caymmi, start up on July 9. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The **WASHINGTON SQUARES** perform on July 2; the **JOHN MC LAUGHLIN** trio holds forth on July 3; and the **JAN HAMMER/TONY WILLIAMS** group takes the stage on July 5. The Irish-born singer **MAURA O'CONNELL,** who'll perform here July 6, recently released a simple, thoughtful record of folk and country and hybrids thereof. She's got a pretty voice, and she doesn't clutter her music with the pop-music conventions that one finds in a lot of crossover-minded folk these days. It turns out that a guitar and a good song—O'Connell does well-chosen covers of tunes by John Hiatt, Tom Waits, Shawn Colvin, and the Beatles, among others—still does the trick. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Bell-bottoms and peace signs aren't the only nostalgia craze in town: at the Cat Club, on Sunday nights, the nineteen-thirties are in vogue. On other nights of the week, the club attracts a scruffy leather-and-lace crowd, but Sundays belong to the Swing Dance Society, whose passion is the Lindy Hop, a dance named after Charles Lindbergh. July 7 belongs to the Widespread Jazz orchestra. Music from eight to midnight.

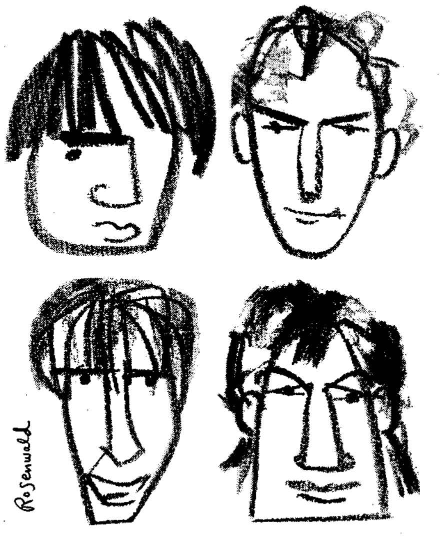
CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club, a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti, is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. Show times vary.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. Drummer **LOUIS HAYES** leads a quintet July 2-7. Music after nine.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Young, loud, and rude. N.Y.U. students like it here, as do punks, weekend punks, and anyone with a taste for rough-and-tumble garage-rock music. There's not a lot to look at—except the band and your fellow-patrons. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

Cornelia Street Café, 29 Cornelia St. (989-9319)—In the basement of this tucked-away Village restaurant-bar is a narrow, white-brick-walled room, decorated with a few tables and steampipes, where you'll find music, poetry readings, and theatre-of-the-cramped. The restaurant itself is a wine-and-candlelight neighborhood café; downstairs, there's a sixties-coffeehouse aesthetic at work. Music begins at nine.

Diva, 306 E. 81st St. (650-1928)—A newly hatched restaurant and piano bar. It's a modest-sized, brick-walled room that offers Italian fare and the musings of pianist **CHARLES DE FOREST** (Tuesdays through Saturdays). De Forest is a songwriter in the Cole Porter tradition, and his work has been championed pretty emphatically of late by Tony Bennett. Music from eight-thirty. Closed Sundays.



The La's, at the Marquee

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of businesspeople and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a Steinway grand, which from July 2-7 belongs to **LYNNE ARRIALE,** appearing in a duo with saxophonist **MIKE HASHIM.** Music from six-thirty.

Greene Street, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—This is such a gorgeous, thirties-ish movie set of a place that you expect gunmen to burst in at any moment. The restaurant-and-bar—forested and twilit—is about the size of a football field, with the piano at the fifty-yard line. If your seats are good enough, you'll hear some able entertainers, including **JOEL FORRESTER** (on July 3) and the **JOHN WEISS** duo (July 5-6).

Kilimanjaro, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—The northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. Music from eleven-thirty.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark-wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass-figurine lamps. Pianist **RONNY WHYTE** and bassist **FRANK TATE** hold forth July 3-6. Music from nine-forty-five.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A frat house for the avant-garde. In some ways, the Knitting Factory doesn't really belong in New York: the cover charge is too reasonable, the management is too laid back, the audiences are too polite. It's a slice of post-collegiate counterculture that somehow landed on Houston Street, of all places. The music is another story—much of the time, it exemplifies urban angst. The **LYRES,** who'll be here July 3, enjoy near-godlike status in the sixties-garage-rock scene. The Boston quartet's sound is composed of crunching guitar riffs, unstoppable rhythmic grooves, pounding organ chords, and hard-edged, unsentimental vocals. When everything falls together, all this makes for a pure distillation of frenzy, lust, and rebellion. Music after nine.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—It's an improbable bar in an unlikely location, but Lauterbach's has spawned a scene of sorts—and the owners have a wall of press clippings to prove it. In its short life span as a rock venue (it has a longer one as a neighborhood bar—the kind of place where Archie Bunker might feel at home), the club has become HQ for a tight little community of Brooklyn bands, a development that has apparently brought in enough money for the club's recent facelift. Still, it's not as though you need a tux to get in the door.

Marquee, 547 W. 2 St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. **KIX** will perform on July 8, and the **LA'S** head up a bill on July 10.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—This small, dark back room of a club has brought in some fine alternative acts in the last couple of months. The **FEELIES,** who appear July 5-6, have an immediately recognizable sound—a combination of incantatory strumming; droning, restrained vocals; and furious tempo accelerations. Onstage, they're unassuming and introspective; they look almost apologetic. **BIRDLAND** can be seen on July 7, and the **MEKONS**—first-wave punkers whose history one band member recently described by saying, "The secret of our success is that we aren't successful"—will be here on July 8.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—There's more to Michael's Pub than Woody Allen, whose occasional Monday-night Dixieland binges have given the place a little star cachet. Non-filmmakers can usually be found onstage here the rest of the week, in a main dining room that strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. Still, there's a real nice red telephone booth when you walk in the door. **CAROL WOODS'** tribute to Pearl Bailey runs through July 6. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot*. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" **BETTY BUCKLEY** winds up a run on July 6. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. When the band is swinging, and you and your dreamboat are cheek to cheek, everything can seem just swell. Mondays and Tuesdays are the property of **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** a band that relies on period instruments, old-fashioned felt-bannered music stands, and original-score arrangements to re-create the look and sound of a thirties swing outfit. Fridays belong to Sam Ulano and his Dixielanders, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers. On July 3 you can catch the Bob Litwack group, with trumpeter **WARREN VACHÉ, JR.** On July 10 the Bill and George Simon group shares the bandstand with the George Gee orchestra. Show times vary.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—All things being equal, we'd rather go to the Marquee—the music is fresher and the atmosphere is less combative. Still, the Ritz's bookings have been looking up of late, and the next couple of weeks hold some promising offerings. The legendary **RICHARD THOMPSON**—tough, earthy singing and lean guitar solos are his specialties—comes in on July 9, at eight. Performing with him will be the young folkie **SHAWN COLVIN**. Colvin's dêbut album was pretty in a dark, thoughtful way, but she's best seen live, where her slightly giddy, self-effacing stage persona lightens the music a touch. (At a Bottom Line show some time ago, Colvin interrupted her set to call a friend long-distance and play a song into her answering machine.) The singer-guitarist generally plays solo, and aside from her own songs she does a few nicely chosen covers, including a quiet, lovely rendition of "This Must Be the Place" that will knock the Talking Heads' version clear out of your head. Shows usually begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and one of the city's more international booking policies: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. This week: **LORNA G.** (July 3), **BERNIE WORRELL** (July 4), **TABOU COMBO** (July 5-6), **POPS COOL LOVE** (July 9), and **CHEB KHALED** (July 10). Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. The probing, eccentric saxophonist **STEVE LACY**, whose compositions juxtapose, well, nearly everything, leads a sextet through July 7. A quintet under the able leadership of **ART FARMER** begins a two-week stand on July 9. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that has become an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is a little slicker and a lot roomier than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. The **MEKONS**—also at Maxwell's this week—stop off here on July 6.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. The **WYNTON MARSALIS** septet is here through July 7; the **DEWEY REDMAN** quintet starts up on July 9. Mondays are reserved for the seventeen-piece **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. **CANNED HEAT,** whose career has had some ups and downs over the last twenty-five years, will perform here on July 6. Music at ten.

Zanzibar & Grill, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—A Murray Hill jazz resort, where the ceiling fans turn slowly, and the palm trees rustle tropically, and the jukebox contains Xavier Cugat and Perez Prado, and a waiter, delivering a plate of fried chicken and maple-pear corn bread to a customer, sings "It's suppertime" (to the tune of "Summertime"). The professional musicians tend to come on at around nine.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. The Mike LeDonne trio plays the tunes July 5-6, and pianist **JUNIOR MANCE** and bassist **MARTY RIVERA** move in for a week beginning on July 8. Music from eight. Closed Sundays.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

WHETHER manning the agora in front of the original Danceteria or conducting his Dadaist Gaijin karaoke marathons with partner/close friend Anita Sarko, Haoui Montaug moved with a cool, clunky grace, a sense of panache that was part Katharine Hamnett and part Fred Flintstone, and a pailful of wit drier than the breeze in Santa Ana. One would no more have labelled Montaug a doorman than one would call a 1955 T-Bird a set of wheels. Nobody did or understood the job better.

NIGHTMARE OF A DOOR DROID

Excuse me excuse me
Who is in charge here
I mean who has the guest list
I must be on it
I am personal friends with just about
anybody you ever heard of
Just check the list
And I am sure that you will find my
name
Why isn't anyone talking to me
Can somebody go get the manager
I am not used to being treated like this
Chains usually open when people see
me walking down the street
What is wrong with this club anyway
Why are you letting that asshole in
And not even looking at me
Who do you think you are
What is the owner's name
Give me his phone number
We'll straighten this out soon enough
How come this big guy is standing
right next to me
Here I am trying to be polite and
peaceful
And just try and get the free
entrance that me and my friends
deserve
And first you ignore me
Then you send this bruiser over to flex
his muscles
What kinda place is this anyway
Hey you, the skinny one with the list
I am getting angry now
Just get over here and talk to me
Do you want to keep your job?

—Haoui Montaug

Haoui Montaug died last month, and, despite the season, the nights are darker.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Deb Margolin—In a reprise of "970-DEBB," in which the performance artist promises to dance around like Madonna. (Interart Theatre, 549 W. 52nd St. 246-1050. July 2-6 and July 9-10 at 8. Through July 28.)

ART

OVER the past couple of years, the Frick Collection has allowed itself the occasional *grand geste* of inter-collegial flattery. These very carefully conceived motions have been directed, quite pointedly, at fellow-institutions whose plump endowments and curatorial acumen have resulted in recent acquisitions worthy, it is strongly implied, of the Frick itself. Last year, for example, the Frick played host to a dryly superb assortment of Old Master paintings newly acquired by the Kimbell Art Museum, of Fort Worth, which is second in youth and wealth only to the Getty. Now through July 7, the Frick's guest rooms are filled with an exhibition titled "From Pontormo to Seurat," an extraordinary group of sixty-one drawings, recently acquired by the venerable Art Institute of Chicago.

New York museumgoers often respond to the Art Institute of Chicago in the same way they respond to the city's bracing winds. Founded on the legacies of big-time industrialists hungrily obsessed with the avant-gardes of their day—yes, Virginia, including Impressionism—the old Chicago collections evoke a reedy, athletic atmosphere that is very different from the air of bankerly contemplation that so pervades the Frick. The Art Institute's Department of Prints and Drawings is spectacular in terms of both historical range and the intensity of individual works, and the Chicago newcomers visiting the Frick might peel your eyes.

Seurat's simple black-crayon drawing "Trees," for instance, seemed to fibrillate with so much tension that we were unexpectedly reminded of Dan Flavin's fluorescent-light pieces. "Head Study of a Sea God," by Natoire, the eighteenth-century French social portraitist, expresses the Rubensian gusto of an artist usually admired for his cool-surfaced formality. Fernand Khnopff's melancholy portrait of his sister, "The Veil," is a frail masterpiece of symbolism, further proof of this Belgian's exquisite technique. Other thrills for greedy eyes include the inky and foreboding "Landscape with Castle," by Victor Hugo, who could not restrain himself from scrawling all over his picture frame, and Adolph Menzel's circa-1860 study, "Weeping Man"—a miracle of empathetic understanding.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A hundred and fifty sculptures, drawings, and decorative objects by Paul Manship (1885-1966). Through Sept. 1. . . . ¶ "The Sculpture of Indonesia," which includes much material on display outside its native land for the first time, exposes us to the fascinating, if only partially knowable, world of Hindu and Buddhist sculpture. The show begins with a few magnificent Bronze Age works—such as a massive ceremonial tablet and axes with fanciful shapes and crisp geometric details in shallow relief—that are included simply to indicate that ceremonial object-making did not begin with the arrival of the Indian deities. Many of these prehistoric pieces bear a strong resemblance to similarly dated ones from China and what is now Vietnam; it is virtually impossible to distinguish a number of the Hindu and Buddhist works here from their Indian antecedents. But when an Indonesian sculptural identity emerges, it is hard to surpass. A stone sculpture here of Prajnaparamita, the goddess of transcendental wisdom, is considered perhaps Indonesia's most important sculpture, and it is indeed the embodiment of grace. It was carved around 1300, in East Java, at the same time and in the same place as a very different statue of Bhairava, a fierce and demonic four-armed deity who wears a necklace of small severed heads, sits on a jackal, and rests his feet on a mound of human skulls. There are many other contrasts in the exhibition, and numerous sculptural wonders, including one of the five hundred and four seated Buddhas from Borobudur, the largest Buddhist temple in the world. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ If you need a break from the blockbusters, or the line for the restaurant is too long, you might wander through the Islamic galleries to "The Perfect Page," a small, glorious display of a few dozen illuminated manuscripts from the museum's extensive collection of Persian, Otto-

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man, and Indian works from the fourteenth century through the nineteenth. As one might expect, there are remarkably detailed volumes of the Koran, with their fanciful Arabic script, and there is also an amazing Ottoman calendar in the form of a scroll, which indicates not simply the date but also the aspects of the sun, the phases of the moon, and the times of prayer in the various seasons. Also included is an exquisite sultan's cipher, similar to the one included in the recent Süleyman the Magnificent extravaganza; this piece must be history's first decorative whiplash shape, anticipating the very modern Art Nouveau lines that followed much later. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ Walter Annenberg, who made a name for himself as the publisher of *TV Guide,* turned down a billion-dollar offer for his modern-art collection and chose instead the nobler path of philanthropy by bequeathing it to this museum several months ago. The gift of the collection, which had been perhaps the finest grouping of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings still in private hands, sets a standard of excellence for future patrons of the arts. The show begins with some exquisite small works by Fantin-Latour, followed by two rooms, devoted to Monet, van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cézanne, that would be the pride of any museum. These rooms include some of the collection's finest works, such as Monet's "Poppy Field, Argenteuil" (1875), Gauguin's "The Siesta" (1892-94), and Cézanne's "The House with the Cracked Walls" (1892-94), all of which were purchased by Annenberg in 1983 from his sister Enid Haupt. Farther on are some very good early-twentieth-century works, including Picasso's haunting "At the Lapin Agile" (1905), an important but somewhat overwrought Vuillard, a beautiful Matisse, and a very pretty Bonnard; these works, however, are not up to the same level as the great Impressionist ones. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden, planted with nine sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—Ninety-five paintings, collages, and gouaches by Ad Reinhardt (1913-67). Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ "Seven Master Printmakers: Innovations in the Eighties." A respectable yet somewhat anachronistic exhibition, loaded with nostalgia for the days when an artistic canon was firmly in place. It is the curator's contention that all the artists in the show, who rose to prominence in the sixties, continued to be innovators in the eighties. Of all the artists shown, Jasper Johns has remained the most engaged in the process of printmaking. Be they etchings, lithographs, or monotypes, Johns' works are exquisite records of gesture. The selection of his prints here forms a thoughtful counterpoint to the retrospective of his drawings mounted recently at the Whitney. As for David Hockney and Jim Dine, they have produced little of historical interest in the eighties, and nowhere is this more evident than in their prints. There is a lot of experimentation in Frank Stella's prints from the decade, but of a sort that perhaps only a technician could love. James Rosenquist entered some risky territory with his eighties prints, and the payoff was great, at times perhaps even greater than in his paintings. Roy Lichtenstein is an undeniable master of the medium, but the selection here is unsatisfying. Robert Rauschenberg is a master, too, and shown here are the kinds of collaged images he does best, but their technique is virtually indistinguishable from what he was doing twenty-five years ago. All this leads us to the question, What *were* the innovations of the eighties? Through Aug. 13. . . . ¶ A small but pleasurably edifying show of drawings and models by the landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. A Brazilian who works mainly in his own country, Burle Marx is an uncompromisingly modern gardener who sculpts and paints with nature in broad, mid-century rhythms and bold strokes. If his emphasis on rubber plants sometimes harks back to all those progressive corporate lobbies of the fifties, his most panoramic vistas still have the big, beautiful look of Tomorrow. Through Aug. 13. . . . ¶ A video installation by Thierry Kuntzel is the latest work in the "Projects" series. Through Sept. 2. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. This summer's program is dedicated to the music of Erik Satie. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until early 1992.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The Biennial is winding down; work by late-eighties and nineties artists is on the fourth floor, through July 7. . . . ¶ Forty-five sculptures, drawings, and various objects made by Hunt Diederich (1884-1953). Through Sept. 29. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8; Wednesdays through Saturdays, except July 4, from 11 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Chris Burden's installation "Medusa's Head" is a five-ton hanging sphere composed of stone and toy trains. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ "*Quattrocento:* Early Italian Panel Paintings." . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm, raffia, and bamboo. Through Sept. 16. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"The Story of a Painting: A Korean Buddhist Treasure from the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation." This scholar's dream show takes a single work of art and casts about in several different historical directions at once. The painting under examination, known as the Burke Triad, depicts the Buddha and two attendant bodhisattvas, and is a rare example of pre-invasion Buddhist art. The show also provides a mini-history of the triad form, a view of Korean Buddhist monastic life, and a sampling of later Korean painting, much of which has a marvellous flattened, Netherlandish space. It's a tightly packed display, fascinating and at times confusing. On the whole it offers a somewhat loopy view, mostly due to the breadth of the subjects and the smallness of the exhibition. Nevertheless, there are several rich works to savor. Through July 28. . . . ¶ "The Here and the Hereafter: Images of Paradise in Islamic Art." Through Sept. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, except July 4, from 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, 1040 Grand Concourse—"The Nearest Edge of the World," an exhibition of works in several mediums by nine contemporary artists from Cuba. Through Aug. 4. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—"From Pontormo to Seurat," a show of drawings from the Art Institute of Chicago. Through July 7. (Open daily, except Mondays and July 4, from 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Painting a Place in America: Jewish Artists in New York, 1900-45." Jewish painters and sculptors have certainly made contributions to the history of twentieth-century American art, but this is a silly idea for an exhibition, and no great historical insight is gained by the segregation. The organizers attempt to give purpose to their presentation by structuring the material around several educational and trade groups that fostered Jewish learning and identity. What the viewer is left with, however, is primarily an impression of second-rate, labored art. But there are some delightful discoveries in the show—works by artists who would likely be overlooked by other art histories. They include a Cubistic 1915 portrait of Marsden Hartley, both witty and gripping, by Ben Benn, and a mythical, Old World circus scene by Benjamin Kopman, with shades of Chagall, Ensor, and Marc. The issue of Jewish identity in modern American art gets interesting at the point where the exhibition ends, with the work of Newman, Rothko, and Gottlieb. The influence of Jewish mysticism on this trio's new art of spirituality is barely given a nod. Through Sept. 29. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 3. Closed July 4.)

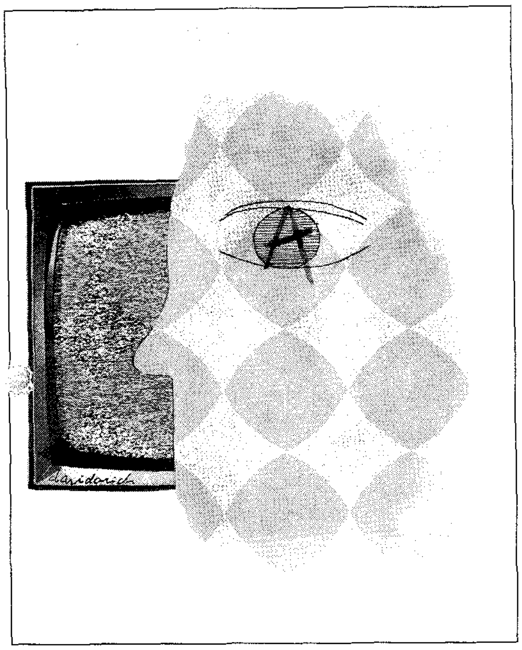
MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—"Mozart: Prodigy of Nature." A comprehensive exhibition of all things Mozart. The show includes more than fifty manuscripts, from four pieces composed at age five to a first draft of the Requiem; early letters home from Italy (December, 1769) and his last letter to his father (April, 1787); and his "Verzeichnüss aller meiner Werke" ("Catalogue of All My Works"), which he kept for the last seven years of his life. Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ Eighteenth-century drawings, from the library's collection, by the Venetian masters Tiepolo, Guardi, and Canaletto. Through Aug. 4. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, except July 4, from 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

ANSWERING ART

Some walls may have ears, but the one Spencer Finch designed along the boardwalk on Coney Island has a big, inquiring mouth. "Forty-five Questions About Water," Mr. Finch's colorful ocean-motif mural depicting coral, fish, and curling turquoise waves below a series of hand-painted questions, stretches across a plywood barrier four hundred and twenty feet long and eight feet high. (The barrier conceals a $20 million expansion project at the New York Aquarium and will stay up until July, 1992.) Some aquatic points the wall makes you ponder are: "Will listening to the ocean add years to your life?"; "Would you say that water is more blue than green?"; "Do you think about 'Jaws' when you go swimming?" The Brooklyn Arts Council, the aquarium's long-standing partner in public-art projects, commissioned Mr. Finch to make the wall "graffiti-proof."

So, on an unusually warm Sunday last October, Mr. Finch, who advocates "democratic expression in art," invited passersby on the boardwalk to respond to his questions. About two hundred participants—many of them retired people from the neighborhood—were armed with cans of spray paint in five colors and with cardboard stencils cut out in the shapes of marine animals (swordfish, tuna, octopus, etc.). They were asked to spray their answers to each question through the stencils onto Mr. Finch's ocean backdrop, choosing from a color-coded selection of responses (green for 'Yes' and yellow for 'No,' with three shades of opinion in between). Mr. Finch, who has previously experimented with having members of the public reply to questions about art using ink-filled squirt guns, was surprised by the coöperation passersby extended and pleased that there were no monochromatic answers. "Even a question like 'Did it rain yesterday?' didn't always get the same response. Some people would get very philosophical. One asked, 'Do you mean here, or anywhere?' "

MUSEO DEL BARRIO, 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St.—The "Nuyorican" experience is alive in the work of Pepón Osorio, who moved to New York from Puerto Rico in 1975. At the entrance to this retrospective of his work is a fancy, fake-Venetian chandelier further ornamented by a trove of tacky tchotchkes, ranging from dominoes and water pistols to plastic ferns and tiny, brittle street-stand dolls. Other lightly nostalgic and comic charmers—some the results of performance collaborations with Merián Soto, the artist's choreographer wife—include "La Cama," a room-size work, with bed and coverlet, dedicated to the artist's nanny, and "Broken Hearts," a set piece, featuring luggage, about



Self-portrait by Jaime Davidovich

the dashed dreams of immigrants from the south. "The Wake," a life-size replica of a funeral parlor full of coffins and body bags, is a harrowing depiction of AIDS, both solemn and almost grotesquely disorienting in a museum setting. Through Aug. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, except July 4, from 11 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Paint, Powder, and Leaf" showcases nearly a hundred decorated objects, from tin coffeepots and cannisters to wood chests and iron fire screens. Through Sept. 15. . . . ¶ An exhibition of twenty-four quilts with floral themes, all prize-winners from this spring's Great American Quilt Festival. Through Sept. 15. . . . ¶ Forty-five narrative paintings by Harry Lieberman (1880-1983). Through Sept. 22. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Africa Explores: Twentieth-Century African Art" presents more than a hundred art works in various mediums. The works are divided into five categories: "Traditional," "New Functional," "Urban," "International," and "Extinct." The Center for African Art has organized the exhibition, which runs simultaneously in its galleries, at 54 E. 68th St. (Open daily, except Mondays; opens Sundays at noon.) Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ In a show called "Embodying Faith," five contemporary artists tackle the theme of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual in Christianity. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ In the museum's Broadway windows is an installation by the Catalan artist Perejaume, titled "Pintura i Representació," that consists of two rows of visitor-accessible theatre seats. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ "Eclipse of the Earth," an installation by Kazuo Katase. Through Aug. 18. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, except July 4, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"The Taste of Andrew Carnegie." The Scottish-born steel industrialist seemed to understand the difference between taste and historical judgment. His taste tended toward brooding Victoriana—sentimental peasant scenes and uninspiringly picturesque landscapes—but when it came to his legacy he trusted the experts and displayed a faith in public institutions that was unparalleled. By the time he died, in 1919, he had given away ninety per cent of his fortune to fund universities, concert halls (including New York's Carnegie), Pittsburgh's Carnegie Institute, and more than twenty-five hundred libraries. This small show includes some of Carnegie's mediocre personal collection as well as selections from a fine print collection, including examples by Dürer and Goltzius, from the Carnegie Institute. The most enjoyable part of the show is the memorabilia, such as a menu from a dinner in Carnegie's honor that describes the "Bieffe" course as "Wut's Good's all Scotch, all that isn't ain't." Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ "Justice Rendered" is a show of forty documents and art works related to the three-hundred-year history of the New York Supreme Court. Through July 7. . . . ¶ Sixty drawings, photographs, and prints of New York structures built at the turn of the century by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White. Through Aug. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, except July 4, from 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Kingdoms of Land, Sea, and Sky" includes a hundred and eighty zoological woodcuts, engravings, and watercolors by artists and naturalists such as Albrecht Dürer, John James Audubon, Edward Lear, and Maria Sibylla Merian. Through Aug. 24. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, except July 4, through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ A display of recently acquired rare books and manuscripts, including Joseph Conrad's manuscript for "The Secret Sharer" and Washington Irving's manuscript for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." (Berg Collection. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, except July 4, through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"Mozart's World" presents more than a hundred prints, manuscripts, and elaborate period costumes from the late-eighteenth century. Through Aug. 31. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, except July 4, noon to 8; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—"Interrelations and Migration: Contemporary Sculpture from Germany" is an exhibition of four artists—Erwin Heerich, Norbert Kricke, Abraham David Christian, and Katsuhito Nishikawa—who have worked in Düsseldorf. Through July 7. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of works by Romare Bearden (1912-88), which includes a hundred and forty-one oils, collages, and watercolors. Through Aug. 11. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, except July 4, from 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

"Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre"—A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from more than seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. Among the highlights is a silver tray that was presented to George Gershwin, engraved with the signatures of a hundred and forty-three theatre luminaries. All the works are from the collection of the Museum of the City of New York. Through July 13. (I.B.M. Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St. Closed Mondays, open Saturdays.)

Short List—**Grégoire Müller,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (closed July 4-5, through July 12); **Bernarda Bryson Shahn,** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (closed July 4-5, through July 26.)

GALLERIES—SoHo

Timur Novikov—Unlike much of the Soviet art that has reached New York, Novikov's narrative paintings are the product of a light touch. All the works in this show consist of two contrasting pieces of fabric sewn together along horizon lines of various sorts; small painted elements added to the fabric set the narratives in motion. Through July 31. (Kind, 136 Greene St. Closed July 4-5.)

Raymond Pettibon / David Moreno—Like fellow-Los Angelenos Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw, and that pair's ancestor William Wegman, Pettibon wreaks stylistic and narrative havoc with his great facility for drawing. The walls of the gallery are covered with his drawings with text, and even if you are an avowed anti-reading art viewer, the exhibition is likely to steal some of your time. All the works are hyperconsciously rooted in the ink-marking process. Certain images or themes recur: maps, question marks, hands, light bursts. Pettibon's incisive wit is typified by a work (one of a series) depicting a Cross-bearing Christ and accompanied by the text "Melancholy is Hereditary in Our Family." / This somewhat elegiac exhibition displays a love of subtlety and a fear of abstraction. A handsome Constructivist "painting" is made of old book covers; in another work, mesmerizing rows of wooden matches are overlaid with a ticker-tape description of the anatomy of the brain. Moreno uses sheer fabrics beautifully, to provide texture and veiled surfaces for his paintings, many of which are elegantly ruptured, in a way that is both poignant and metaphoric. Through July 6. (Feature, 484 Broome St.) Closed Mondays and July 4-5; open Saturdays, and Wednesdays until 8.)

Richard Tobias—Paintings from 1983 to the present. This very subtle artist brings a strange, febrile lyricism to otherwise cool, precise, geometric compositions, thereby striking a balance of mood and temperature that sometimes recalls late Kandinsky. Tobias's most recent abstractions include buoyant, biomorphic shapes against gridded white grounds; these works suggest a reticent temperament flowering into boldness. They are crisp, funny, and warm-to-hot. Through July 12. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. Closed July 4-5.)

Gilberto Zorio—This Arte Povera artist is half mystic, half trickster. In the main gallery is a kayak-shaped piece with long copper rods and a bulbous flask filled with a copper-sulfide composition. The work is suspended from metal supports that aggressively stab the walls like javelins; it delineates its space with the theatrical grace of baroque architecture. There are also two metal star shapes, with similar supports. At regular intervals, a timer goes off and the sculptures start shaking, and loud scraping, whistling sounds pierce the space with the urgency of a Richard Foreman production. Upstairs, there are several fine drawings and a beautifully attenuated Dionysian bong. Its flask is filled with vodka, which a tall person could drink by sucking on the suspended end of a copper tube. Through July 27. (SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. Closed July 4-5.)

"Redemption Songs II: Spirit Works from the Black Diaspora"—This exhibition of works by self-taught artists from the United States, South America, and the Caribbean has quite a range. Included are works on paper by Joseph Yoakum and Minnie Evans, two folk artists "discovered" by younger modernists several decades ago, and the flat, childlike paintings of Robert St. Brice, a voodoo priest. Each of these artists, none of whom are still alive, contributed significantly to our understanding of the folk spirit. Also on display are works by lesser-known current artists, such as the exceedingly weird beast sculptures of Bessie Harvey, which are made of twisted and gnarled roots with added eyes, hair, and nose-beads, and a chair, made of heavily lacquered snuff bottles, by Willie Leroy Elliott, Jr. The oldest work in the show—an anonymous nineteenth-century totemic sculpture of stocky black figures with unforgettable faces—is also the most haunting. Through July 6. (Cavin-Morris, 560 Broadway. Closed July 4.)

"The Third Rail"—Urban anxiety has been a recurring theme recently, and this group show attempts to reveal what the new Harings and Holzers are up to. Works here are made of such functional urban materials as nightsticks, apartment-door peepholes, metal escape hatches, and a bulletproof ticket window. The show includes a lot of work well installed in a small space, but, despite noble intentions, most of it lacks depth and, curiously, bite. Through July 12. (Lee, 588 Broadway. Closed Mondays and July 4-5.)

Group Show—Recent works by three very different artists from this gallery. Ashley Bickerton is trying very hard, but his new piece—an incense-burning shrine dealing with labor, immigration, and survival—doesn't work. Terry Winters' new paintings on paper of skeletal body parts seem deliberately less sensual than usual, and somewhat more interesting. Gilberto Zorio is represented by two eccentrically visionary sculptures of the sort he currently has on view at SteinGladstone. Through July 26. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Closed Mondays and July 4-5.)

Short List—**Gary Brotmeyer,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (closed Mondays and July 4-5, through July 31); **Jaime Davidovich,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (closed Mondays and July 4-5, open Saturdays, through July 13).

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

PHOTOGRAPHY

Although "earth art" got its name in the sixties, it is, of course, an ancient idea. Right now, there's an opportunity at the Lowinsky gallery to see a beautiful group of late-nineteenth-century photographs that qualify as earth art. The exhibition is of oval cyanotypes made by Henry P. Bosse (1844-1903), originally for an album commissioned by the Army Corps of Engineers. The images were taken on the upper Mississippi River, between Minneapolis and St. Louis, and they document both the river's life and its surroundings. So many elements in these photographs are of interest—the changing horizons, the shapes of the river, the engineering of the bridges and wing dams—that once you start looking it's hard to stop. There are raftboats, tugboats, towboats, and steam launches, and intriguing mysteries such as a photograph of a steam launch named Elsie that seems to be pushing brush, even though a handwritten caption informs us that Elsie is "towing brush." Information accompanying the exhibition tells us that Bosse's work was seen by Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt (Teddy) and that it had environmental consequences. It also tells us about Bosse, a photographer new to us. Apparently, he died from poisoning after eating canned asparagus.

(A small show of photographs by André Kertész is also on view at the gallery.)

Brian Weil / Paul Ickovic—A show of photographs the artist has made in response to the AIDS epidemic. Weil is not only serious and well intentioned but also highly conscious of the complexities of his subject and its representation. His work is particularly revealing because he takes portraits of individuals, not of a "disease." Through July 21. / "Safe Conduct," a show of black-and-white photographs documenting the recent political and social upheaval in Czechoslovakia. Through July 21. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays and July 4, from 11 to 6.)

"Music 1930-90"—Portraits of musicians, from Billie Holliday to Jane's Addiction, by such artists as Philippe Halsman, Horst, Norman Seeff, Laura Levine, and Phil Stern. Through July 11. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. Closed Mondays and July 4.)

Group Show—A diverse and absorbing group of pictures compiled with children in mind. There are terrific Weegees; several charming Lartigues; *a hysterical Doisneau on the* theme of boredom in school; and many other works of well-known photographers. There are cloud pictures, moon pictures, and "puzzle pictures," and images that make you wonder how they were done, such as a shot by John Loengard of a miniature village in which a real cat dwarfs the minuscule inhabitants. If only more exhibitions for adults were this engaging! Through July 31. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway. Closed Mondays and July 4-5.)

Short List—**TINA BARNEY**, Janet Borden, 560 Broadway (closed Mondays and July 4-5, through July 12); **ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ** and **HENRY P. BOSSE**, Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (closed July 4-5, through July 31); **LAURIE LAMBRECHT**, Ame Plumb, 81 Greene St. (closed July 4-5, through July 25); **NINA HOWELL STARR** and **MICHAEL VON GRAFFENRIED**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (closed July 4-5, through Aug. 23).

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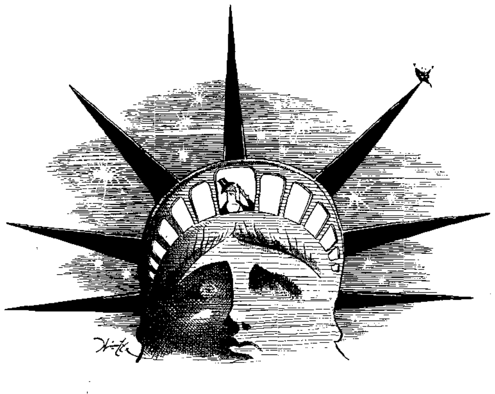
MUSIC

The New York City Opera is once again opening its season with a Broadway musical. Under Beverly Sills, these entertainments tended to be tacky, uninspiring exercises in fifties nostalgia. Christopher Keene, when he succeeded the soprano as general director, allowed as how the experiment of presenting classic musicals in a special winter season would be discontinued, and one had the feeling he was not especially enthusiastic about keeping the company involved in Broadway material at all. But, ironically, last year's production of "A Little Night Music" proved the most tasteful and best received of City Opera's Broadway ventures, and it is with a revival of that production that the season is to open next week.

The rest of the season looks familiar in most ways: Puccini keeps the pot boiling to support American and twentieth-century works. But there are differences of emphasis (notably the presentation of Zimmermann's "Die Soldaten," a successor in City Opera's repertoire to last season's beautiful presentations of "Moses und Aron"). In fact, it is a different City Opera that opens this week, and where the company will end up is a matter of some uncertainty. We spoke with Christopher Keene a few months ago about his plans. He made no secret of his wish to lead the troupe out of the State Theatre, and we could only commend his frankness; it is a wretched hall for opera, acoustically unflattering to the young voices on which the company depends. Money was on Mr. Keene's mind as well. When Ms. Sills retired as general director, the company lost in her its most effective fund-raiser—and even when she was at the helm City Opera experienced tight finances and aggravated labor relations. Money problems in the current economic climate are not matters to be taken lightly. Because of the theatre's unsuitability and also because of a sense that Lincoln Center confers a certain institutional mustiness on its component organizations, we would love to see the City Opera set up shop somewhere else. But no sooner do we have that thought than another occurs: Lincoln Center confers also an aura of indispensability; a departure by the financially troubled City Opera could be a prelude to letting the company die altogether, off to the side, with less embarrassment to the cultural establishment. We would rather put the thought out of our mind and wish Mr. Keene Godspeed, because we liked "Moses und Aron" very much and we like the direction in which he seems to want to take the company.



IN TOWN—OPERA

Bolshoi Opera—Final New York performances of this tour. July 1-2 at 8: Rimsky-Korsakov's "Mlada." . . . ¶ July 3 and July 5 at 8, and July 6 at 1: Tchaikovsky's "The Maid of Orleans.". . . ¶ July 6 at 8: Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting Mozart's "La Finta Giardiniera," or—as it's called in this production, which offers arias in Italian and recitatives in English—"The Phony Gardener." *David Freiman is the conductor.* (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. July 5-6 at 7:30 and July 7 at 2:30.)

New York City Opera—The opening performance of the season, which runs through Nov. 17. **A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC**, by Stephen Sondheim, with Sally Ann Howes, Elaine Bonazzi, Beverly Lambert, Maureen Moore, Joanna Glushak, George Lee Andrews, Kevin Anderson, and Michael Maguire; conducted by Paul Gemignani. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. July 9 at 8.)

New York Grand Opera—Vincent La Selva conducts "La Traviata," in concert. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playground, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 10 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

IN TOWN—CONCERTS

Gregg Smith Singers—Performing a program of American music. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 2 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Andrew Bolotowsky—Performing a star-spangled piccolo recital, including nineteenth-century variations and fantasies on "Yankee Doodle," "Darling Nelly Gray," and "Marching Through Georgia." Beverly Shea assists at the piano. (Federal Hall, 26 Wall St. July 3 at 12:30. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—Solo and chamber music by Liszt, Schumann, and Brahms, performed by pianist Joseph Villa, violinist Carmit Zori, and cellist Jian Wang. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. July 4-5 at 7:30 and July 7 at 4.)

La Maîtrise Gabriel Fauré—A twenty-voice *women's choir from Marseilles, directed by* Thérèse Farré-Fizio, performs folk-song arrangements as well as works by Palestrina, Rossini, Fauré, and others. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. July 7 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

Goldman Memorial Band—Gene Young conducts a program that includes music by Copland, Bernstein, and Virgil Thomson (his "A Solemn Music" and "Metropolitan Museum Fanfare"). (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 7 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Hawthorne String Quartet—The foursome—all members of the Boston Symphony—performs chamber music written by Hans Krasa, Gideon Klein, Zikmund Schul, and Viktor Ullmann while they were interned in the Terezin concentration camp. Terezin (which the Germans called Theresienstadt) fulfilled a unique role among the Nazi camps. It was populated by a multitude of musicians, composers, dancers, and artists—mostly Czech Jews and homosexuals. Under orders from their S.S. overseers, the inmates created a large repertoire of works that, ironically, were used as evidence to the outside world that the camp was actually an art-filled "paradise ghetto." (Winter Gar-

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MUSIC—Cont'd

den, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. July 8 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Arlan Sunnarborg—Performing organ works by Lübeck, Messiaen, and Vierne. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. July 9 at 7. Admission by contribution.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—The opening concerts of the festival, which hits the quarter-century mark during this Mozart bicentennial year, and which runs through Aug. 24. July 9 at 8:30 and July 10 at 8: The Festival Orchestra, conducted by Gerard Schwarz, performs a Mozart program comprising the "Nozze di Figaro" overture, the Symphony in D, K. 320 (derived from the "Post Horn Serenade"); the First Flute Concerto, with James Galway; and the Piano Concerto in E-Flat, K. 271 (the "Jeunehomme"), featuring André Watts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

Galina Borisova in the Bolshoi Opera's "Mlada"

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—July 3 at 8:30: Bach's "The Art of Fugue," performed by the Juilliard String Quartet. . . . ¶ July 4 at 7: A concert by Bob Dylan, followed by fireworks. . . . ¶ July 5 at 9: Mahler's Second Symphony (the "Resurrection"), the first concert of a weekend dedicated to the memory of Leonard Bernstein, whose enthusiastic presence energized Tanglewood for half a century preceding his death last autumn. Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and soprano soloists Hildegard Behrens and Jessye Norman. . . . ¶ July 6 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa, Oliver Knussen, and Carl St. Clair conduct the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in a program that includes Bernstein's "Benediction" and excerpts from Mahler's "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" (featuring baritone Thomas Hampson); excerpts from Bernstein's "Candide" (with soprano June Anderson) and from Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde" (with soprano Hildegard Behrens); and Bernstein's "Jeremiah" Symphony (with soprano Jessye Norman). The concert also spotlights pianists Leon Fleisher (performing Gershwin's "The Man I Love," in Earl Wild's arrangement for piano left-hand) and Bobby Short (assisting Ms. Norman in selections from four of Bernstein's works for Broadway). . . . ¶ July 7 at 2:30: Itzhak Perlman joins Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony for Mozart's Third Violin Concerto; and soprano June Anderson and baritone Thomas Hampson are soloists in Brahms' "A German Requiem," in which the conductor leads the orchestra and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus. Pavel Haas's "Study for String Orchestra" rounds out the program. . . . ¶ July 10 at 8:30: Christopher Hogwood conducts the Handel & Haydn Society Orchestra in an all-Mozart program: the Symphony No. 29; the Piano Concerto in F, K. 459; and the Rondo in A—the last two featuring fortepianist Robert Levin, who will also improvise on a theme suggested by the audience. (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Caramoor Music Festival—July 4 at 5:30: Robert Fisher conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in works for Broadway by Richard Rodgers, Frank Loesser, and Leonard Bernstein; with soprano Rebecca Luker, mezzo-soprano Kim Criswell, and tenor Kevin Anderson. . . . ¶ July 5 at 9: The Cassatt String Quartet performs quartets by Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. . . . ¶ July 6 at 8:30: Frederica von Stade is the soloist in arias by Handel and Gluck, as well as selections from Canteloube's "Songs of the Auvergne," accompanied by the Orchestra of St. Luke's (which also offers orchestral works by Beethoven and Poulenc). Julius Rudel conducts. . . . ¶ July 7 at 5:30: The Tokyo String Quartet performs chamber music by Mozart, Schumann, and Zemlinsky. (Katonah, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-914 232-1252.)

Cape May Music Festival—Final concerts of the season in this Victorian setting on the Jersey shore. July 4 at 8: The New York Festival of Song, directed by Michael Barrett and Steven Blier, performs an all-American songfest, featuring music by Gershwin, Bernstein, Ives, and Cole Porter. (Christian Admiral Hotel.) . . . ¶ July 5 at 8: The New York Festival of Song performs Leonard Bernstein's "Arias and Barcarolles." (Christian Admiral Hotel.) . . . ¶ July 6 at 8: A concert by the Philadelphia Trio, with guest harpist Anne Sullivan, that includes works by Bach and Couperin. (Cape Island Baptist Church.) (For information about tickets, call 1-609 884-5404.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—July 5 at 8:30: The Tokyo String Quartet performs quartets by Brahms and Mozart, as well as the latter's Horn Quintet (featuring William Purvis). . . . ¶ July 6 at 8:30: Persichetti's Serenade (for trombone, viola, and cello), as well as music by Mozart (songs, *notturni*, and his Oboe Quartet, featuring Ronald Roseman). (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. For information about tickets, call 1-203 542-5537.)

Waterloo Festival Orchestra—The opening of the orchestra's sixteenth season (which runs through Aug. 10), with concerts in a tent at Colonial Waterloo, Stanhope, N.J. July 6 at 8:30: Gerard Schwarz conducts Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony and Liszt's First Piano Concerto, with Sergei Edelmann as soloist. James Earl Jones will join the ensemble as narrator in Aaron Copland's "Lincoln Portrait." (For ticket and travel information, call 1-201 347-4700.)

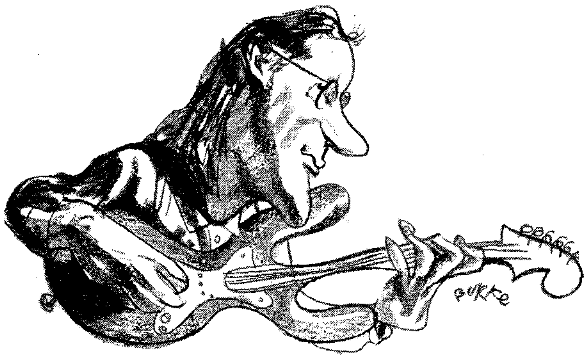
JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Steve Winwood—With Joe Cocker. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 9 at 8.)

Chicago—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 10 at 8.

Jones Beach Theatre—July 3 at 7: David Lee Roth, with Cinderella and Extreme. . . . ¶ July 5 at 8: The Doobie Brothers, with Joe Walsh. . . . ¶ July 7 at 8: Dan Fogelberg, with Tim Weisberg. . . . ¶ July 10 at 8: Morrissey, with Phranc. (1-516 221-1000.)

Central Park SummerStage—July 6 at 3: **MARSHALL CRENSHAW.** This high-strung, proficient, and bespectacled singer-songwriter is a pop encyclopedist and a dream guitarist who in the course of a show runs wild through the history of the rock guitar. Crenshaw can make the steel strings twang, echo, throb, and ring with a clear electric cry. If there were any justice—or an inspiring Top Forty—he would have had a succession of hits from here to Tommy James and the Shondells. In the real world, he's got a fine new album and a new record contract, and his current band is one hot combo. Equally tuneful and pleasing is the opening act, Toronto's **BLUE RODEO,** a frisky, countrified outfit that swings and sometimes sounds vaguely like the Cowboy Junkies on a caffeine jag. . . . ¶ July 7 at 3: Zin and Foula. (Rumsey Playground, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 360-2777.)



Marshall Crenshaw, at SummerStage

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Away until July 11, when they face the San Diego Padres.

Yankees—Vs. the Cleveland Indians, July 1-3 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Baltimore Orioles, July 4 at 1, July 5 at 7:30, and July 6-7 at 1:30. (The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499, and the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000. The All-Star game is July 9 in Toronto.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays, except Mondays and Thursdays, at 1:05. . . . ¶ At Atlantic City Race Course: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:15. ● **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

CHAMPIONSHIP—TENNIS

As the Ball Bounces—Monica the grunting powerhouse pulled a last-minute ta-ta, forfeiting her chance at a '91 Grand Slam. Enter Martina, who can win an unprecedented tenth singles title and retire with enough fortune and fame to support a host of litigants. As for Stefan, Boris, and the Ivanmeister, not to mention the upstart Andre ("image is everything"): at Wimbledon, image is a double fault; Centre Court is everything. Tune in to HBO during the week and to NBC for the power-packed final episodes.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Glorious Fourth—Cap your day of picnics and softball with a stroll along the F.D.R. Drive (closed that evening from 14th to 42nd Streets) to the edge of the East River. There, from the deck of a barge (at 9:20), the party-happy Macy's people will ignite more than ten thousand shells, resulting in fireworks shaped like butterflies, silver swallows, and peonies. For a preview, head down to the South Street Seaport on the evening of July 3, where fans of pyrotechnics will be given a treat at 9:30.

Swing Dancing—By the fountain in Lincoln Center. July 3: Rosco Gordon and Killing Floor. . . . ¶ July 4: Peter Duchin and his orchestra. . . . ¶ July 5: Ed Polcer and the Condon Reunion Band. . . . ¶ July 6: Lionel Hampton. . . . ¶ July 10: Raul Jaurena and Marga Mitchell. (Evenings at 8:15. Tickets available at the gate on the nights of the events.)

Readings—July 9 at 8: Mary Morris reads from her own prose. (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 10 at 7:30: Joanna Gleason and John Rubinstein read from the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Langston Hughes, Edith Wharton, John O'Hara, and Dorothy Parker. Some musical numbers are also included in the program. (Equitable Center Auditorium, Seventh Ave. at 51st St. For information about tickets, call 554-5100.)

Memorandum—The fifteenth annual American Crafts Festival will be held outdoors at Lincoln Center, July 6-7, from noon to 9. No tickets necessary.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 20.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: Through July 4: "An Angel at My Table" (directed by Joan Campion), with Kerry Fox. From July 5: "Slacker" (Richard Linklater).

Theatre 2: "The Comfort of Strangers" (†).

Theatre 3: "La Femme Nikita" (Luc Besson, in French).

Theatre 4: "The Reflecting Skin" (Philip Ridley), with Lindsay Duncan.

Theatre 5: "Drowning by Numbers" (Peter Greenaway).

Theatre 6: Through July 9: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez, in French), with Tsilla Chelton. From July 10: "Regarding Henry" (Mike Nichols), with Harrison Ford and Annette Bening.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

July 1: Theatre closed.

July 2-3: (Separate admissions) "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada; and "Au Hasard, Balthazar" (1966, Robert Bresson; in French).

July 4: Theatre closed.

July 5: (Separate admissions) "Hiroshima, Mon Amour"; and "Au Hasard, Balthazar."

July 6-7: (Separate admissions) "Hiroshima, Mon Amour"; and "In the Realm of the Senses" (1977, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese), with Eiko Matsuda and Tatsuya Fuji.

July 8: Theatre closed.

July 9: (Separate admissions) "Hiroshima, Mon Amour"; and "In the Realm of the Senses."

From July 10: (Separate admissions) "Hiroshima, Mon Amour"; and "In the Realm of Passion" (1978, Oshima; in Japanese).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).

Theatre 2: Through July 2: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†). From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (James Cameron), with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton.

Theatre 3: "Dying Young" (†).

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)

Theatre 1: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

Theatre 2: "City Slickers" (†).

Theatre 3: "City Slickers" (†).

Theatre 4: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.

Theatre 5: "Truth or Dare" (†).

Theatre 6: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore, in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.

Theatre 7: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

"Eating" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: "The Object of Beauty" (Michael Lindsay-Hogg), with John Malkovich and Andie MacDowell.

Theatre 2: "What About Bob?" (†).

Theatre 3: "Ju Dou" (†).

Theatre 4: "Dark Obsession" (Nicholas Broomfield), with Gabriel Byrne and Amanda Donohoe.

Theatre 5: "The Rocketeer" (Joe Johnston), with Bill Campbell, Alan Arkin, and Jennifer Connelly.

Theatre 6: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).

Theatre 7: "Impromptu" (†).

Cinema Village 3rd Avenue, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

"Extramuros" (Miguel Picazo, in Spanish), with Mercedes Sampietro and Carmen Maura.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: Through July 9: "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (Joseph Vasquez). From July 10: "Regarding Henry" (Mike Nichols), with Harrison Ford and Annette Bening.

Theatre 2: "Soapdish" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (David Zucker), with Leslie Nielsen.

Theatre 4: Through July 2: "Soapdish" (†).
From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (James Cameron), with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton.

Theatre 5: Through July 2: "Kickboxer 2" (Albert Pyun), with Sasha Mitchell. From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."

Theatre 6: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear."

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"What About Bob?" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"Dying Young" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).

Theatre 2: "Jungle Fever" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Rocketeer" (Joe Johnston), with Bill Campbell, Alan Arkin, and Jennifer Connelly.

Theatre 4: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (David Zucker), with Leslie Nielsen.

Theatre 2: "City Slickers" (†).

Theatre 3: Through July 9: "Soapdish" (†). From July 10: "Regarding Henry" (Mike Nichols), with Harrison Ford and Annette Bening.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"Backdraft" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"The Reflecting Skin" (Philip Ridley), with Lindsay Duncan.

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "The Rocketeer" (Joe Johnston), with Bill Campbell, Alan Arkin, and Jennifer Connelly.

Theatre 2: "The Rocketeer."

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"Dying Young" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Jungle Fever" (†).

Theatre 2: "Jungle Fever" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

Through July 2: "Impromptu" (†).

From July 3: "Problem Child II" (Brian Leant), with John Ritter.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).

Theatre 2: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: "What About Bob?" (†).

Theatre 2: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

Theatre 3: "Every Other Weekend" (Nicole Garcia, in French), with Nathalie Baye.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: Through July 2: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate. From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (James Cameron), with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton.

Theatre 2: Through July 2: "Truth or Dare" (†). From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Backdraft" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (David Zucker), with Leslie Nielsen.

Theatre 2: "City Slickers" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

Through July 2: "The Object of Beauty" (Michael Lindsay-Hogg), with John Malkovich and Andie MacDowell.

From July 3: "The Miracle" (Neil Jordan), with Beverly D'Angelo and Donal McCann.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

Through July 9: "Soapdish" (†).

From July 10: "Regarding Henry" (Mike Nichols), with Harrison Ford and Annette Bening.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (David Zucker), with Leslie Nielsen.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: "Jungle Fever" (†).

Theatre 2: "Backdraft" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: "The Rocketeer" (Joe Johnston), with Bill Campbell, Alan Arkin, and Jennifer Connelly.

Theatre 2: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: Through July 2: "The Runner" (1985, directed by Amir Naderi; in Farsi). From July 3: "Marquis" (1989, Henri Xhonneux; in French).

Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.

Theatre 3: "Paris Is Burning" (†).

Bleecker Movie House, 144 Bleecker St. (807-9205)

Theatre 1: "Poison" (Todd Haynes).

Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "The Golden Boat" (Raul Ruiz). "Forever Activists—Stories from the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade" (Judith Montell), a documentary.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "Backdraft" (†).

Theatre 2: "Jungle Fever" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

"Bright Angel" (Michael Field), with Dermont Mulroney and Lili Taylor.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "Soapdish" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (David Zucker), with Leslie Nielsen.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: Through July 2: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin. From July 3: "Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).

Theatre 2: Through July 4: "Daddy Nostalgia" (Bertrand Tavernier; in English and French), with Dirk Bogarde and Jane Birkin. From July 5: "Drowning by Numbers" (Peter Greenaway).

Theatre 3: Through July 2: "Dances with Wolves" (Kevin Costner), with Costner. From July 3: "Backdraft" (†).

Theatre 4: Through July 2: "The Silence of the Lambs" (Jonathan Demme), with Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins. From July 3: "Spartacus" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "City Slickers" (†).

Theatre 2: "Dying Young" (†).

Theatre 3: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).

Theatre 4: "Jungle Fever" (†).

Theatre 5: "City Slickers" (†).

Theatre 6: "Jungle Fever" (†).

Theatre 7: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).

Theatre 8: Through July 2: "Backdraft" (†). From July 3: "Problem Child II" (Brian Levant), with John Ritter.

Theatre 9: "Dying Young" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: Through July 2: "Impromptu" (†). From July 3: "Backdraft" (†).

Theatre 2: "Truth or Dare" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Rocketeer" (Joe Johnston), with Bill Campbell, Alan Arkin, and Jennifer Connelly.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

Through July 9: "Thelma & Louise" (†).

From July 10: "Regarding Henry" (Mike Nichols), with Harrison Ford.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Truth or Dare" (†).

Theatre 2: Through July 2: "Ju Dou" (†). From July 3: "Problem Child II" (Brian Levant), with John Ritter.

Theatre 3: "Jungle Fever" (†).

MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Theatre 4: Through July 9: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall. From July 10: "Regarding Henry" (Mike Nichols), with Harrison Ford and Annette Bening.
Theatre 5: "Spartacus" (†).
Theatre 6: "Impromptu" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Dying Young" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Citizen Kane" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Impromptu" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez, in French), with Tsilla Chelton.
Theatre 2: "La Femme Nikita" (Luc Besson, in French), with Anne Parillaud, Jean-Hugues Anglade, and Jeanne Moreau.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"My Father's Glory" (Yves Robert, in French), with Julien Ciamaca.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Soapdish" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"What About Bob?" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Everybody's Fine" (Giuseppe Tornatore, in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni.
Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (†).
Theatre 3: "A Paper Wedding" (Michel Brault, in French), with Geneviève Bujold.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Dying Young" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).
Theatre 2: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 9: "Thelma & Louise" (†). From July 10: "Regarding Henry" (Nike Nichols), with Harrison Ford and Annette Bening.
Theatre 4: "The Rocketeer" (Joe Johnston), with Bill Campbell, Alan Arkin, and Jennifer Connelly.
Theatre 5: Through July 2: "Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (David Zucker), with Leslie Nielsen. From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (James Cameron), with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton.
Theatre 6: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear."

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 2: "Jungle Fever" (†). From July 3: "Problem Child II" (Brian Levant), with John Ritter.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Backdraft" (†).
Theatre 2: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 2: (Matinées only) "Home Alone" (directed by Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin; and (evenings only) "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis. From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (James Cameron), with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton.
Theatre 3: Through July 2: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†). From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."
Theatre 4: "Kickboxer 2" (Albert Pyun), with Sasha Mitchell.
Theatre 5: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 6: Through July 2: "Kickboxer 2." From July 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Rocketeer" (Joe Johnston), with Bill Campbell, Alan Arkin, and Jennifer Connelly.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (David Zucker), with Leslie Nielsen.
Theatre 2: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear."
Theatre 3: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"City Slickers" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Jungle Fever" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 2: "Jungle Fever" (†). From July 3: "Problem Child II" (Brian Levant), with John Ritter.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead" (Stephen Herek), with Christina Applegate.
Theatre 2: "A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Robin Givens, and Danny Glover.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Through July 3: "2001: A Space Odyssey" (directed by Stanley Kubrick), with Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood; and "2010" (1984, Peter Hyams), with Roy Scheider.
July 4-6: "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (1981, Steven Spielberg), with Harrison Ford, Karen Allen, Paul Freeman, and John Rhys-Davies; and "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (1989, Spielberg), with Ford, Sean Connery, Denholm Elliott, and Alison Doody.
July 7-8: "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" (†); and "The Virgin Queen" (1955, Henry Koster), with Bette Davis, Richard Todd, and Joan Collins.
July 9-10: "Cocoon" (1985, Ron Howard) and "Cocoon: The Return" (1988, Daniel Petrie), both with Don Ameche, Wilford Brimley, Brian Dennehy, Hume Cronyn, Jack Gilford, Maureen Stapleton, Gwen Verdon, Jessica Tandy, and Steve Guttenberg.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
July 1: "Bix" (1981, Brigitte Berman); and "Young Man with a Horn" (1950, Michael Curtiz), with Kirk Douglas and Lauren Bacall.
July 2: "Jazzman" (1984, Karen Shakhnarazov; in Russian); and "King of the Gypsies" (1978, Frank Pierson), with Sterling Hayden, Shelley Winters, Susan Sarandon, Judd Hirsch, Brooke Shields, Eric Roberts, and Annie Potts.
July 3: "Leadbelly" (1976, Gordon Parks), with Roger E. Mosley; and "Mississippi Blues" (1983, Bertrand Tavernier and Robert Parrish; in French and English), a documentary.
July 4: "A Song Is Born" (1948, Howard Hawks), with Danny Kaye, Virginia Mayo, Hugh Herbert, and Steve Cochran; and "Reveille with Beverly" (1943, Charles Barton), with Ann Miller and Larry Parks.
July 5: "Maxine Sullivan: Love to Be in Love" (1991, Greta Schiller), a documentary; and films clips of Louis Jordan, Slim Gaillard, and other jazz performers.
July 6: A program of jazz cartoons, including Betty Boop films.
July 7: "Elevator to the Gallows" (1957, Louis Malle; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Maurice Ronet, Lino Ventura, and Georges Poujouly; and "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" (1959, Roger Vadim; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Gérard Philipe, Annette Vadim, and Jeanne Valerie.
July 8: "Orchestra Wives" (†); and film clips of the Nicholas Brothers (see page 6).
July 9: "Odds Against Tomorrow" (1959, Robert Wise), with Robert Ryan, Harry Belafonte, and Ed Begley; and "I Want to Live!" (1958, Robert Wise), with Susan Hayward.
July 10: "Blues in the Night" (†); and a program of Warner Brothers jazz shorts from the twenties, thirties, and forties.

Newman Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
July 1: Theatre closed.
July 2-3: "Sugarbaby" (1985, Percy Adlon; in German); and "Ariel" (1989, Aki Kaurismaki).
July 4: Theatre closed.
July 5-6: "Notorious" (1946, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, and Louis Calhern; and "Foreign Correspondent" (1940, Hitchcock), with Joel McCrea, Laraine Day, and George Sanders.
July 7: "The Hawks and the Sparrows" (1967, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Totand Ninetto Davoli; and "Fists in the Pocket" (†).
July 8: Theatre closed.

Waterlogged acting and strained Olympian wit can't douse the exuberant magic of "Jason and the Argonauts" (playing July 4 at Theatre 80 St. Marks), which boasts a brassy, percussive score by Bernard Herrmann and Ray Harryhausen's most stunning and imaginative special effects. Jan Read and Beverley Cross's 1963 retelling of the Greek legend, directed by Don Chaffey, cuts between earth and Olympus, as Jason (Todd Armstrong) seeks out the Golden Fleece, and Zeus and Hera (Niall MacGin[illegible] and Honor Blackman) play chess with the Argonauts' fates. Despite the fancy prattle about destiny and free choice, most kids (and adults, too) will experience the film simply as a series of enthralling supernatural adventures.

Harryhausen's Harpies are a cross between gargoyles and pterodactyls. His man of bronze is a giant with an Achilles' ankle—twist off a cap where his leg meets his foot, and his fuel, or life force, spills out. (The simplicity of the screw's design is inspired: it suggests an unfathomable internal machinery.) Harryhausen doesn't duplicate his effects or peak too early. Even one of the weaker episodes—Poseidon holding the Clashing Rocks apart for the good ship Argus's passage—is saved by the satisfying flap of the sea-god's flukes against the water. The film ends with a double-barrelled bang: Jason duels the seven-headed Hydra, then battles the spawn of the Hydra's teeth, armed skeletons who march and fight with spooky determination and precision. The only drawback of the powerhouse climax is that the skeletons seem fiercer and more animated in every way than Armstrong's Jason.

July 9-10: "Orpheus" (1949, Jean Cocteau; in French), with Jean Marais, Maria Casarès, and François Périer; and "Oedipus Rex" (1967, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Franco Citti and Silvana Mangano.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 1: "Smiles of a Summer Night" (1955, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ulla Jacobson, Eva Dahlbeck, Gunnar Björnstrand, and Jarl Kulle; and "The Magic Flute" (1975, Bergman; in Swedish).
July 2: "Rain" (1932, Lewis Milestone), with Joan Crawford, Walter Huston, William Gargan, and Beulah Bondi; and "Of Human Bondage" (1934, John Cromwell), with Bette Davis, Leslie Howard, Frances Dee, and Kay Johnson.
July 3: "Macbeth" (1971, Roman Polanski), with Jon Finch; and "Chimes at Midnight" ("Falstaff"; 1967, Orson Welles), with Welles, Jeanne Moreau, John Gielgud, Keith Baxter, and Margaret Rutherford.
July 4: "The 7th Voyage of Sinbad" (1958, Nathan Juran), with Kerwin Mathews, Kathryn Grant, and Richard Eyer; and "Jason and the Argonauts" (see blurb above).
July 5-6: "Jules and Jim" (1962, François Truffaut; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner, and Henri Serre; and "The 400 Blows" (1959, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud.
July 7: "Stardust Memories" (1980, Woody Allen), with Allen, Charlotte Rampling, Jessica Harper, Marie-Christine Barrault, and Tony Roberts; and "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex" (1972, Woody Allen), with Allen.
July 8: "Vampyr" (1932, Carl Dreyer, in German), with Julian West, Henriette Gérard, Rena Mandel, and Sybille Schmitz; and "Day of Wrath" (†).
July 9: "Home from the Hills" (1960,

On July 4th, the Boston Pops will play live in your living room.

"Pops Goes the Fourth"

Thursday, July 4, 7:30-10:30pm ET/4:30-7:30pm PT

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Vincente Minnelli), with Robert Mitchum, Eleanor Parker, George Hamilton, and George Peppard; and "The Night of the *Hunter*" (†).

July 10: "This Gun for Hire" (†); and "The Glass Key" (1942, Stuart Heisler), with Brian Donlevy, Veronica Lake, and Alan Ladd.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—July 1 at 2:30: "Trans-Europ-Express" (1966, directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet; in French), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Marie-France Pisier, and Nadine Verdier. . . . ¶ July 1 at 3: "Juan Felix Sanchez" (1982, Calogero Salvo) and "Boneshop of the Heart: Folk Offerings from the American South" (1990, Scott Crocker and Toshiaki Ozawa). . . . ¶ July 1 at 6: "Variety Lights" (1950, Alberto Lattuada and Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina. . . . ¶ July 1 at 6, July 2 at 3, July 5 at 6, July 6 at 5, July 7 at 2:30, and July 7 at 5: Four different programs of short films made at the Film Arts Foundation. . . . ¶ July 2 at 2:30 and July 4 at 6: "The Guard" (1989, Aleksandr Rogoschkin; in Russian). . . . ¶ July 2 at 6 and July 4 at 2:30: "The Tall Target" (1951, Anthony Mann), with Dick Powell and Adolphe Menjou. . . . ¶ July 2 at 6: "The Times of Harvey Milk" (1984, Robert Epstein and Richard Schmiechen). . . . ¶ July 5 at 2:30 and July 6 at 5: "Strangers on a Train" (1951, Alfred Hitchcock), with Farley Granger, Robert Walker, and Ruth Roman. . . . ¶ July 5 at 3: "Nine Years Behind the Wheel" (1986, Edward Jones) and four short films. . . . ¶ July 5 at 6 and July 6 at 2: "The General" (1927, Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman), with Keaton and Marion Mack. . . . ¶ July 6 at 2:30: "Metamorphosis: Man Into Woman" (1989, Claudia Hover and Lisa Leeman), a documentary. . . . ¶ July 7 at 2 and July 9 at 2:30: "Rio Lobo" (1970, Howard Hawks), with John Wayne. . . . ¶ July 7 at 5 and July 8 at 2:30: "Endless Dream" (1986, Lauro Escorel Filho; in Portuguese), with Carlos Alberto Riccelli. . . . ¶ July 8 at 6: "When the Daltons Rode" (1940, George Marshall), with Randolph Scott, Kay Francis, Brian Donlevy, Broderick Crawford, and Stuart Erwin. . . . ¶ July 9 at 6: "The Sleeping Car Murders" (1965, Costa-Gavras; in French), with Simone Signoret and Yves Montand.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (477-2714)—July 1 at 8: "Slacker" (1991, Richard Linklater). . . . ¶ July 3 and July 5-7 at 8 and 9:30, and July 10 at 7 and 8:30: "Jimi Hendrix at the Isle of Wight" (1991, Murray Lerner), a documentary of the 1970 music festival. . . . ¶ July 5-7 at 10:30: "The Adventures of Sylvia Couski" (1973, Adolfo Arrieta). . . . ¶ July 6 at 5: "Intolerance" (1916, D. W. Griffith; silent), with Lillian Gish. . . . ¶ July 7 at 6:30: A program of five short films.

Museum of Television and Radio, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." July 2-3 and July 5-6: "Young People's Concerts: Who Was Gustav Mahler?" (1960, CBS) and "Young People's Concerts: Humor in Music" (1959, CBS), both with Leonard Bernstein. . . . From July 9: "The Ed Sullivan Show" (1959, CBS), a program honoring Richard Rodgers, broadcast from Carnegie Hall; and a half-hour show of news stories and commercials featuring Carnegie Hall. Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30. . . . ¶ "A Salute to Monty Python." From July 2: "Fawlty Towers" (1975, BBC) and "Cheers" (1987, Paramount), both with John Cleese. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15, 2:30, and 5:30; Wednesdays (except July 4) through Fridays at 12:15 and 2:30; and Saturdays at 12:15.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 5th Ave. at 81st St. (879-5500)—July 5 at 6: "Juliet of the Spirits" (1965, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina. . . . ¶ July 6 at 6: "Spellbound" (1945, Alfred Hitchcock), with Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Leo McCarey: The King of Comedy," a program of films directed by McCarey. July 6 at 2: Four short silent comedies featuring Charley Chase and Laurel & Hardy. . . . ¶ July 6 at 4: "Wrong Again" (1929), with Laurel & Hardy; and "The Sophomore" (1929, silent), with Eddie Quillan and Sally O'Neil. . . . ¶ July 7 at 2: "Let's Go Native" (1930), with Jack Oakie and Jeanette MacDonald. . . . ¶ July 7 at 4: "Wild Company" (1930), with H. B. Warner and Frank Albertson. . . . ¶ July 9-10 at 2: Two television programs by McCarey—"You Can Change the World" (1951), with Loretta Young; and "Meet the Governor" (1955), with Herb Shriner.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—July 10 at 8: "Metropolis" (1926, Fritz Lang; a German silent), with Brigitte Helm, Alfred Abel, Gustav Fröhlich, and Rudolf Klein-Rogge. Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.

IN BRIEF

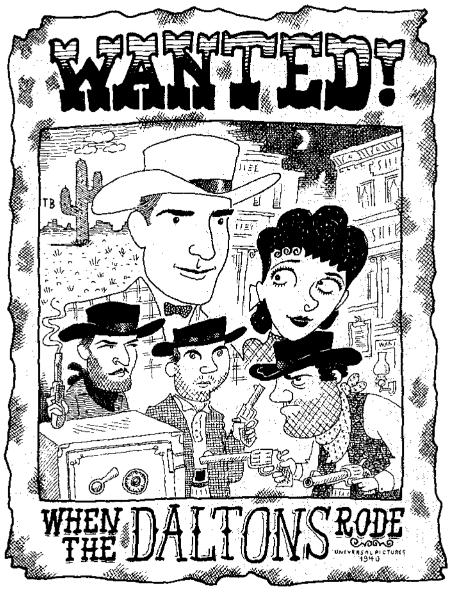
SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Backdraft—This urban disaster/action movie makes the audience laugh just once: when a stalwart fireman (Scott Glenn), still on the scene of his latest conquered blaze, takes a drag on a cigarette. It's one of the few grand-old-movie gestures that click in what amounts to a compendium of men-at-work clichés. The plot centers on estranged brothers Kurt Russell (a soon-to-be-legendary firefighter) and William Baldwin (an anxious apprentice), who work out their differences in the midst of mysterious arsons and towering infernos. Gregory Widen's script is like a *Mad* parody played straight, full of "Scenes We Wouldn't Like to See." The effects are boggling, but the director, Ron Howard, employs them like a cross between a night-club hypnotist and a hardware salesman—his characters murmur about fire's mesmerizing and bestial qualities, then he hits the audience with flames and hoses. Russell is appealingly brash until a bogus subplot forces him to suggest borderline psychosis. Jennifer Jason Leigh and Rebecca De Mornay also show up, but only Robert De Niro, as an arson investigator, and Donald Sutherland, as a pyromaniac, rise above the material.—M.S. (34th Street East, Beekman, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, and Olympia. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through July 2. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema, and 23rd St. West Triplex; starting July 3.)

Blues in the Night (1941)—Jazz and melodrama, in a fermented mixture. Directed by Anatole Litvak and written by Robert Rossen, this self-serious, overheated Warners picture about the life of travelling musicians was released just before Pearl Harbor. Richard Whorf is the tormented pianist who cracks up, and Betty Field is the bad, bad girl who not only leads him astray but kills Lloyd Nolan, and is herself killed in a car crash with Wallace Ford. Whorf's band includes Elia Kazan; the vocalist is Priscilla Lane. The songs are by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen. Also with Jack Carson, whose trumpet playing is by Snooky Young, and Jimmy Lunceford and his band. Whorf's piano playing is dubbed by Stan Wrightsman. —P.K. (Film Forum 2; July 10.)

Citizen Kane (1941)—The Orson Welles film is generally considered the greatest American film of the sound period, and it may be more fun than any other great movie. Based on the life of William Randolph Hearst, it's an exuberant, muckraking attack on an archetypal economic baron. With Welles, of course, and Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead, Everett Sloane, George Coulouris, Ruth Warrick, Ray Collins, Erskine Sanford, William Alland, Paul Stewart, Fortunio Bonanova, Gus Schilling, and Philip Van Zandt. Screenplay by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Welles; cinematography by Gregg Toland; editing by Robert Wise and Mark Robson; music by Bernard Herrmann; art direction by Van Nest Polglase and Perry Ferguson.—P.K. (Loews Festival.)



At MOMA, Brian Donlevy, Randolph Scott, Stuart Erwin, Kay Francis, and Broderick Crawford in "When the Daltons Rode"

City Slickers—This feel-good comedy, directed by Ron Underwood from a script by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is a depressingly efficient piece of Hollywood product. The hero, Mitch Robbins (Billy Crystal), is a thirty-nine-year-old New York family man who's going through a killer midlife crisis. His wife (Patricia Wettig) gets so fed up with his moping that she virtually orders him to take a vacation with his buddies Ed (Bruno Kirby) and Phil (Daniel Stern); Ed, a daredevil, macho type, has arranged for them to spend two weeks on a real cattle drive out West. Mitch's wife looks him in the eye, and says earnestly, "Go and find your smile"—and, ninety minutes later, there it is, a grin as big as all outdoors. His pals pick up the odd nugget of wisdom along the trail, too. The movie alternates predictable tenderfoot gags (sore behinds, stampedes, and the like) with long, ludicrous passages of group-therapy-on-the-range. Jack Palance, as Curly, the trail boss, manages some dry, macabre comic effects, and the animals are good—they're interesting to look at, and they don't make bad jokes. You can't help sympathizing with the cattle; by the time the movie is over, you know what it feels like to be part of the herd. Also with Helen Slater.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/17/91.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

The Comfort of Strangers—Harold Pinter's screenplay, adapted from a novel by Ian McEwan, is a kinky contemporary variation on the sort of plot that made Victorian readers shiver—the story of innocents lured into the clutches of charming villains. The innocents here are an unmarried English couple (Natasha Richardson and Rupert Everett) vacationing in Venice; the evil seducers are a husband and wife (Christopher Walken and Helen Mirren) whose tastes run to voyeurism and sadomasochism; the dread lair in which the monsters toy with their prey is a huge, ornately furnished apartment with a spectacular view of the city. The director, Paul Schrader, dresses his characters in Armani and sets the camera in motion to swirl gracefully around them, picking up miragelike shimmers from the canals and beautiful but ominous architectural details; the languorous camera movements create an authentically gothic sense of catastrophe just around the corner. Walken glides effortlessly through his role as the embodiment of Old World evil. He gives the character a lordly, sinister air, and suggests, as well, that he's wearing something really odd underneath his superbly tailored white suits. And Richardson is characteristically amazing: she brings a touch of humanity to this rather formal party. The movie improves on the novel by jettisoning its dubious psychology and its pretensions to literary significance. Schrader treats the story as an elegant horror-movie game, a trick done with mirrors, and he carries it off. Dante Spinotti's cinematography and Gianni Quaranta's production design contribute to the luxurious, decadent atmosphere. Music by Angelo Badalamenti. —T.R. (4/8/91) (Angelika Film Center.)

Day of Wrath (1943)—It has been said that Carl Dreyer's art begins to unfold just at the point where most directors give up, and this psychological masterpiece, suggesting a fusion of Hawthorne and Kafka, is proof. In 1623, the young second wife of an austere pastor desires his death because of her love for his son; when she tells the pastor of her feelings, he suffers a stroke and dies. Accused of witchcraft, she becomes what she and her accusers believe a witch to be, and as she is trapped, and all possibility of hope is stripped away from her, the viewer's identification with her fear becomes unbearable; then Dreyer dissolves our terror as she is purified beyond even fear. The most intense, powerful film ever made on the subject of witchcraft, it explores the erotic tensions of the "witch" and her accusers. With Lisbeth Movin as the wife and Anna Svierkeir as Marthe, the old woman who is arrested and burned at the stake in the great early sequences. Based on the play "Anne Pedersdotter," by Wiers Jensen; the musical arrangements of the "Dies Irae" (which gives the film its title) and the other fateful hymns are by Poul Schierbeck. Not shown outside Denmark until after the war; opened in this country in 1948. In Danish.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 8.)

Dying Young—Julia Roberts' vehicles are so closely linked that they resemble a series. Even the "movie tie-in" editions of the original novels "Sleeping with the Enemy" and "Dying Young" sport similar red-white-and-black cover art; it's as if they were installments in a Julia Roberts line of contemporary gothic romances. In her latest outing, America's favorite working girl is the nursemate-turned-lover of a leukemia-stricken upper-class twit (Campbell Scott), a cousin of the psychotic U.C.T. in "Enemy" and the mercenary one in "Pretty Woman." The director, Joel Schumacher, and the writer, Richard Friedenberg, simplify and prettify the material. Unlike her counterpart in Marti Leimbach's book, Roberts never two-times her edgy, arrogant lover with a more easygoing man (Vincent D'Onofrio). The onslaught-of-illness stuff is rendered not with emotion but with makeup and lighting. The actors are reduced to models in a film that tries to sell compassion by the shot. With Colleen Dewhurst, Ellen Burstyn, and David Selby.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Bay Cinema, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

Eating—All the action in Henry Jaglom's film takes place at the fortieth-birthday party of a Southern California woman named Helene (Lisa Richards), and all the characters—thirty-eight of them—are women. None of the women at this party—with the exception of Helen's mother (Frances Bergen), who represents the values of an older generation—can eat without guilt; several of them have clinical eating disorders, for which they hate themselves. Jaglom films them in his usual group-therapy style: the camera remains fixed as characters lob banal confessions and accusations at each other. This is meant to create the illusion of raw emotional truth, but the bulimics' ball Jaglom throws here isn't much of a party, and it's bad therapy, too. Whatever Jaglom may have intended, his film winds up trivializing its theme and humiliating its subjects. He's advertising the movie as "A Very Serious Comedy About Women and Food," but its "serious" message is glibly offensive, and there's nothing funny about it.—T.R. (5/20/91) (Cinema Village 12th Street.)

Europa Europa—This superb film by the Polish director Agnieszka Holland is based on the memoirs of Salomon Perel, a German Jew who spent much of the Second World War passing for Aryan in an élite Hitler Youth academy. The movie dramatizes this almost inconceivable survival story with a surprisingly light touch. It bounds from one jaw-dropping episode to the next with the speed

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Harrison Ford in "Regarding Henry"

and the unnerving neutrality of a picaresque adventure, and never pauses to judge its ambiguous hero; it's content to let the ironies of his situation collect around him like reflections in dressing-room mirrors. His family's flight from the Nazis begins in 1938, on the eve of his bar mitzvah. Solly (played by a remarkable young actor named Marco Hofschneider) lands first in Lodz, Poland, and then in the Soviet Union, where he becomes a star pupil in a Communist school. After the Wehrmacht invades Russia and takes him prisoner, he reincarnates himself as an orphaned "pure" German, an Aryan child wandering in the barbaric eastern wilderness; as translator and mascot, he accompanies the German soldiers on their march through Russia. He's an awfully adaptable kid: attractive, personable, good at languages, and deft at lying. By the time he is initiated into the Hitler Youth, he has already run through several identities, and has proved himself capable of playing his roles with conviction and enthusiasm. We remain, however, constantly aware (as he is) of what his Nazi disguise conceals—his circumcised penis, the irreversible and unambiguous sign of his identity as a Jew. Holland uses this physical evidence of Solly's Jewishness as the fulcrum of the movie's delicately balanced narrative and moral tensions. She shows us the thoroughness of Nazi terror in the pained expression of a teen-age boy who doesn't dare allow himself to be seduced. Also with Julie Delpy, Andre Wilms, Halina Labonarska, and Rene Hofschneider. The real Salomon Perel appears, as himself, in the movie's final scene. In German and Russian.—T.R. (7/1/91) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Fists in the Pocket (1966)—This first film by Marco Bellocchio must surely be one of the most astonishing directorial débuts in the history of movies, yet it is hard to know how to react to it. The direction is exhilaratingly cool and assured, and the whole movie is charged with temperament, but the material is wild. It's about a bourgeois family of diseased monsters; epileptic fits multiply between bouts of matricide, fratricide, and incest. The material is so savage that the movie often seems intended to be funny, but *why* it was so intended isn't clear. It features the best strange-brother-and-sister act since "Les Enfants Terribles": Lou Castel, with his pug-dog manner, and Paola Pitagora, looking like a debauched gazelle. Cinematography by Alberto Marrama; music by Ennio Morricone. In Italian.—P.K. (Newman Theatre; July 7.)

Impromptu—James Lapine's film is an ebullient and absurdly entertaining account of the famous love affair of George Sand and Frédéric Chopin. The script, by Sarah Kernochan, makes Sand's wooing and winning of frail, chaste young Chopin into a busy exercise in farce, with a full complement of deception and setbacks and misunderstandings. Celebrities of the Romantic movement—Delacroix, Musset, and Liszt among them—are put through their paces, along with George and Frédéric, in the salons and ballrooms and country houses of eighteen-thirties France; they issue florid declarations of love, hurl barbed epigrams at their rivals, challenge each other to duels, and, over all, make complete asses of themselves in their pursuit of the sublime. They're lively company. The historical figures in this movie are cartoons, but they're cartoons with recognizable human qualities, and the actors look as if they were having a wonderful time charging around in their period costumes. Hugh Grant's Chopin is a brilliant caricature of the Romantic ideal of the artist; he gives the character an air of befuddled unworldliness, and punctuates his readings with delicately timed tubercular coughs. Judy Davis plays Sand—a great actress in a great role. Davis makes Sand's passionate absurdities both funny and tremendously moving; this woman's willingness to embarrass herself seems a kind of romantic heroism. Also with Bernadette Peters, Julian Sands (as Liszt), Mandy Patinkin (as Musset), Emma Thompson, and Ralph Brown (as Delacroix). The costumes, by Jenny Beavan, are spectacular. —T.R. (5/6/91) (Village East Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ 59th Street East Cinema, and 23rd St. West Triplex; through July 2.)

Ju Dou—It's been compared to James M. Cain, but the postman barely rings once in this tale of adultery Chinese style. In a small mountain village in the twenties, an impotent dye-mill owner (Li Wei), crazed over his lack of an heir, tortures his beautiful young bride (Gong Li). She seeks comfort in the arms of his worker nephew (Li Bao-Tian). There's no compelling plot, only the grinding inevitability of fate and tradition. The director, Zhang Yimou, simply metes out punishment to the lovers, the tyrant—and the audience. The lovers' son does most of the damage. He has the lethal power of the Children of the Damned—unfortunately, without the gimmicky zest of their eerie, glowing eyeballs. Zhang started out as a painter and still photographer. He remains one, devoting more attention to the dye mill's set design than to the story or the characters. The bolts of fabric are colored in subtle, vivid hues; the people are made out of whole cloth. In Mandarin.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; through July 2.)

Jungle Fever—The central event in Spike Lee's new movie is the love affair of Flipper (Wesley Snipes), a married African-American architect from Harlem, and Angie (Annabella Sciorra), an Italian-American office temp from Bensonhurst. Once Lee has set up the interracial relationship, he seems to lose interest in it; Flipper and Angie hold the stage only long enough to ignite the fears and hatreds of their communities, and when the fuse is lit their job is done. The movie's approach to its characters is stubbornly, and perversely, external; we never have the sense that we're getting inside anyone's skin (white or black). Everything in this picture is pitched at the level of public utterance. Lee's dialogue has the rhetorical tone of daytime-television talk shows; even in the most intense, emotionally charged domestic scenes, there's an alienating self-consciousness in the way the characters express themselves—they always look as if they had an ear cocked for audience response. This rhetorical barrage gives the picture a peculiar, halting rhythm: individual scenes have force and momentum, but the movie as a whole seems stalled, inert, uncertain where it's headed. And Lee's attitude toward interracial sex is shockingly puritanical; it's as if he were afraid that any hint of eroticism would constitute an endorsement of Flipper and Angie's affair. The scenes that deal with Flipper's crackhead brother, Gator (Samuel L. Jackson), have more energy than anything else in the picture; this subplot is tangential to the central theme, but it has some shape and dramatic coherence, and it actually builds to a climax. The interracial affair just dawdles to an underdramatized parting, and we feel nothing; emotionally, the movie has separated the lovers from each other, and from us, long before. Also with Lonette McKee, John Turturro, Anthony Quinn, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, and Frank Vincent. The inventive cinematography is by Ernest Dickerson. Some fine new songs by Stevie Wonder grace the soundtrack.—T.R. (6/17/91) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

The Night of the Hunter (1955)—Despite its peculiar overtones of humor, this is one of the most frightening movies ever made (and truly frightening movies become classics of a kind). Robert Mitchum is the murderous, sex-obsessed, hymn-singing soul-saver with hypnotic powers, and his terrified new wife (Shelley Winters), who has a boy and a little girl from an earlier marriage, becomes his fervent disciple. He is something of a Pied Piper in reverse: adults trust him, children try to escape. The two kids' flight from the madman is a mysterious, dreamlike episode—a deliberately "artistic" suspense fantasy, broken by the appearance of a Christian variety of fairy godmother (Lillian Gish). The adaptation of Davis Grubb's novel was James Agee's last film work, and this shadowy horror fable was the first and only movie directed by Charles Laughton; it was a total financial disaster, and he never got a chance to direct again. With Evelyn Varden, James Gleason, Don Beddoe, and Peter Graves. Cinematography by Stanley Cortez.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 9.)

Orchestra Wives (1942)—Livelier than the title (which sounds like a statistical classification) suggests. It's the swing era, the band is Glenn Miller's (with Tex Beneke and the Modernaires), and the screenwriters, Karl Tunberg and Darrell Ware, use the shopworn love triangle of the innocent small-town girl (Ann Rutherford) who marries a musician (George Montgomery) and then comes up against his old flame, the band's vocalist (Lynn Bari), as a framework for all the snappy repartee they can pile on. Archie Mayo directed this musical for Twentieth Century Fox, and the picture has a seedy, unassuming pungency. Best of all, the moviemakers were prepared to jettison the story line for the sake of entertainment: suddenly, at the end of the picture, the Nicholas Brothers, that great team of dancers, come out of nowhere and do one of their most dizzying acrobatic tap routines, to "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo." The number is such a feat of sustained high flying that you hold your breath in tense admiration. The cast includes Glenn Miller, Jackie Gleason, Carole Landis, Cesar Romero, Virginia Gilmore, and Mary Beth Hughes; the tunes include "Serenade in Blue," "At Last," "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and "Bugle Call Rag"; among the musicians are Bobby Hackett and Ernie Caceres, and when Jackie Gleason plays the bass you're actually hearing Doc Goldberg. Cinematography by Lucien Ballard.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; July 8.)

Paris Is Burning—Jennie Livingston's documentary about gay black and Latino men who compete in drag balls is a beautiful piece of work—lively, intelligent, exploratory. The drag queens we see here seem to be holding up a mirror to the world of the empowered as they see it in movies, TV shows, and magazines. In the ballroom, some present themselves as elegant, glamorous women in designer outfits, and walk with the hip-swinging slouch of runway models, while others adopt more mundane personas: college students (of both sexes); military men; Wall Street businessmen; aristocrats at play, dressed for yachting or riding to hounds. The criteria by which all these turns are judged is verisimilitude—"realness." The material is almost too rich, too suggestive. Everything about the ball culture signifies so blatantly and so promiscuously that the movie induces a kind of semiotic daze. Livingston is smart enough not to reduce her subjects to the sum of their possible meanings, perhaps because she realizes that the way the drag performers manipulate image and fetishes and the iconography of popular culture is for many of them a sophisticated form of humor. The most self-aware of the gay men in this picture revel in the ironies of their social and sexual identities, and Livingston makes us appreciate the comic grace and the strange wisdom of that approach. Like all the best documentary filmmakers, she does her subjects the honor of allowing them to retain some of their mystery. Edited by Jonathan Oppenheim.—T.R. (3/25/91) (Film Forum.)

The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex (1939)—Bette Davis, well painted and dressed for the role of the shrewd old Queen, looks the part and gives a magnetic, tough performance, but an impossible task was set for her, since as Essex, Errol Flynn couldn't come halfway to meet her. His talents were in other directions; the role was totally outside his range, and the poor man seemed to know it. Davis's performance is bound to suffer from comparison with Glenda Jackson's multifacetted Elizabeth on television, but Davis's Elizabeth is a precursor of Jackson's—it might almost be a sketch for the Jackson portrait. Michael Curtiz directed this adaptation of the Maxwell Anderson play. With Olivia de Havilland, Henry Daniell, Leo G. Carroll, James Stephenson, Vincent Price, Donald Crisp, and Ralph Forbes. Music by Erich Wolfgang Korngold.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; July 7-8.)

Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves—A dull, dutiful trek through the legend of the bandit of Sherwood Forest, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor. Watching this picture is about as much fun as paying taxes, and far less stirring emotionally. We never feel that anyone involved in making this multimillion-dollar, two-hour-and-twenty-one-minute spectacle had any real affection for the story. The screenplay, by Pen Densham and John Watson, is a mishmash of halfhearted dramatizations of episodes from the legend and equally halfhearted nods to contemporary attitudes. If the movie had an exuberant spirit—as the 1938 "Adventures of Robin Hood," with Errol Flynn, had, in near-manic overabundance—we'd be more inclined to overlook the script's incoherence. But there's not much joy in evidence here. The direction, by Kevin Reynolds, is stolid and impersonal, and Kevin Costner seems miscast as Robin: he's not a forceful enough actor for this role. The merry men are an unmemorable lot; even Little John (Nick Brimble) and Friar Tuck (Michael McShane) don't make strong impressions, because they haven't been given anything interesting to do. (In this version, Little John *loses* his famous battle with Robin in the stream.) The audience seems to perk up only when Alan Rickman, as the villainous Sheriff of Nottingham, is on the screen. He gives a florid, theatrical performance—there's real glee in his malice. Also with Morgan Freeman, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, Christian Slater, Michael Wincott, and Brian Blessed (who's so vivid in his brief scenes as Robin's father that we wish the movie were about him instead).—T.R. (7/1/91) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Baronet, Coronet, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Soapdish—The punchy, wisecracking love child of "Tootsie" and "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown." In the mad, mad, mad, mad world of daytime television, on- and off-screen soap operas collide, creating a series of explosions building to one big bang. With Sally Field as the American Sweetheart who turns into the Queen of Misery, Whoopi Goldberg as her best friend and head writer, Cathy Moriarty as her rival, Robert Downey, Jr., as her producer, and (best of all) Kevin Kline as her onetime lover and resurrected co-star, it's the kind of brash entertainment Hollywood isn't supposed to be able to make anymore—a whirling show-biz farce sped up for the era of instant infotainment. The characters have emotional-seepage problems: their competitive drives and backstage frustrations keep leaking into their jobs. Kline, in his most skillful and risible screen performance yet, has an additional dilemma—he can't locate any unrehearsed feelings. The movie's director, Michael Hoffman, brings out the jester in everyone; the editor, Garth Craven, cuts for maximum snap. And the screenwriters, Andrew Bergman and Robert Harling, wring fun out of fustian and keep the shallow characters on the run. Daytime TV is thought to be too easy to lampoon. But through a combination of lowdown parody and soapsmanship, Hoffman and company satirize the seemingly unsatirizable. With Elisabeth Shue, Teri Hatcher, and, in a pair of sharp, brief comic turns, Carrie Fisher and Garry Marshall.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, Art Greenwich Twin, and Loews Paramount. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace, and Loews Tower East; through July 9.)

Spartacus (1960)—This may be the best-paced and most slyly entertaining of all the decadent-ancient-Rome spectacular films. It's a great big cartoon drama, directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Kirk Douglas at his most muscular as the slave gladiator Spartacus, who leads a rebellion of his fellow-slaves against the might of Rome. Spartacus makes some conscientious speeches—out of Howard Fast (who wrote the novel) by way of Dalton Trumbo (who did the screenplay)—but there's so much else going on that it's easy to brush off the moralizing. Laurence Olivier is Spartacus' antagonist, Crassus, a devious patrician who wants to rule Rome in the name of order—he is designed as a supersubtle Fascist. Crassus is a wonderfully gaudy character: he takes Tony Curtis, a young "singer of songs," as his sexual favorite, but he also has a fancy for the slave girl whom Spartacus loves—Jean Simmons. She has never been more beautiful, and the emotions that appear on her humor-filled face are blessedly sane. Peter Ustinov is superb as a slave dealer, who along with his grovelling sycophancy and his merchant's greed has his resentments; and Charles Laughton, amusingly wide in his toga, is a wily old Roman senator. (The two of them have a chat about the beneficial effects of corpulence.) As a gladiator who is Spartacus' friend and who is forced to fight him, Woody Strode has the quietest, most elegant physical presence in the movie.—P.K. (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; starting July 3.)

Thelma & Louise—The heroines, played by Geena Davis (Thelma) and Susan Sarandon (Louise), are a couple of Arkansas women who set out for a weekend in the mountains and wind up speeding through the Southwest, on the run from the law. (Louise has murdered a man who tried to rape Thelma in a roadhouse parking lot.) The movie, written by Callie Khouri and directed by Ridley Scott, is designed to keep pushing the women farther and farther out there—past the point of no return, into the vanishing point of a vast Western landscape, and, finally, over the edge of the world. It's a pretty shameless outlaw fantasy; the feminist justification that the script provides for the heroines' behavior doesn't make their actions any less preposterous. But you can recognize the crudeness of the movie's narrative devices and still have an awfully good time. There's an exhilarating ease and intuitiveness in the way Davis and Sarandon work together, and the camera lingers on them as if it couldn't get enough of them. Scott's direction gives the story a pleasantly dreamy quality: when Thelma and Louise are on the road, the movie has the look of a mirage, a jewelled shimmer that keeps us half hypnotized. He turns Davis and Sarandon into outlaw princesses, and they're so vivid and likable that they carry us past the plot's most obvious contrivances; a little disbelief seems a small price to pay for being allowed to remain in their company.—T.R. (6/3/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Cinema II. . . . ¶ Guild, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through July 9.)

This Gun for Hire (1942)—Glossily amusing Paramount version of the Graham Greene spy-intrigue thriller "A Gun for Sale"; the film's sentimentality has a satisfying underlayer of perversity. Alan Ladd is the nervous, gentle, and sensitive gunman without a trace of human kindliness; what heart he has he gives in the care of sad cats, mongrels, and such. Laird Cregar is the sinister, stout villain with fussy habits; the proprietor of a night club, he hires Veronica Lake to entertain the patrons. This was Veronica Lake's first big starring role, and she is the most stylized character of all. Her face is so impeccably blank that when she smiles, as she does perhaps twice in the film, hearts can be heard to break—smack—in the theatre. With Robert Preston, Tully Marshall, March Lawrence, and Mikhail Rasummy. Directed by Frank Tuttle.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 10.)

Truly, Madly, Deeply—A lovely, original comedy about a young woman, named Nina (Juliet Stevenson), who is obsessed with the memory of her dead lover. The writer and director, Anthony Minghella, establishes an unusual, delicately varied mood, and the film moves gracefully from a realistic mode into a fantastic one. One night, Nina's lover, Jamie (Alan Rickman), reappears in her flat, and his presence seems perfectly natural to us: he has emerged from a setting that is already charged with the heroine's feelings for him. Once he's back, she has to confront, in the most concrete way, what it would really mean to live the rest of her life with a dead guy as her significant other: the movie is less a ghost story than a weird kind of domestic comedy. Minghella draws us into a fresh and startlingly humane vision of modern urban life; the details of the heroine's way of living always seem to point beyond themselves, and there's an emotional unity to everything we see. Minghella writes dialogue that sounds casual but somehow takes us straight to the heart of his work's larger concerns, and he directs the actors beautifully. Rickman is unexpectedly romantic here, and very funny besides. And Stevenson gives a radiant performance: she doesn't have a false moment, or a boring one, in the whole picture.—T.R. (5/6/91) (Cinema 3. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; starting July 3.)

Truth or Dare—Madonna was at her best on "Saturday Night Live," when she played herself for laughs as a pop temptress who puts out for her fans. But in this maddeningly prolonged, self-important, semi-documentary backstage look at her Blond Ambition tour, she plays not just for laughs but for shocks, tears, leers, and, most of all, for adoration. Her way of being truthful and daring is to allow the young director, Alek Keshishian, to depict her as a twenty-four-hour diva who mothers her backup performers and as a scantily clad Statue of Liberty standing up for free expression. The bits of her stage show (shot in 35-mm. color; the rest is in 16-mm. black-and-white) seem ludicrous when she describes them as part of "an emotional journey." The movie has been so over-reported that the celebrity bits with Warren Beatty, Kevin Costner, and Sandra Bernhard, and the friction among members of Madonna's biological and stage families, come off as the retold story. There's no jolt left to seeing Madonna do what you've already read about. The movie is all calculation, no revelation—unless you count the calculation itself as a revelation.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Gemini; through July 2.)

What About Bob?—As the character before the question mark—a multiphobic personality looking for a family—Bill Murray is touched not just with an armada of fears and tics but also with comic genius. Bob is a psychiatrist's nightmare, an achingly needy yet cunning patient, and Dr. Leo Marvin (Richard Dreyfuss) is the shrink he's currently haunting, a self-centered psychobabbler concerned with going on vacation and promoting his new book, "Baby Steps." Dreyfuss gives a shrewd, felicitous performance; he knows how to express a control freak's stroked ego with the merest quarter-smile. But the movie is shaped to redeem Bob and to give Leo his comeuppance, reducing Dreyfuss to shrieking fits. Tom Schulman's script (from a story by Alvin Sargent and Laura Ziskin) and Frank Oz's direction lack any sustained tone, including muscle tone. When Bob starts bonding with Leo's kids (Charlie Korsmo, Kathryn Erbe) and wife (Julie Hagerty), Murray's instinctive iconoclasm is all that keeps the film from going completely sentimental and flabby. The way Murray plays Bob, he embodies the ages of man—negatively. He can be alarmingly infantile and pathetically decrepit, and still be adept at getting what he wants. Underneath the gloss of good feeling, Murray conveys the selfishness within his basket case. Murray and Dreyfuss (and the final plot twist) manage to put across the essence of Bob and Leo's relationship: a clash of egomaniacs.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Gramercy, Cinema I, and 62nd & Broadway.)

At Film Forum 2, Susan Hayward in "I Want to Live!"

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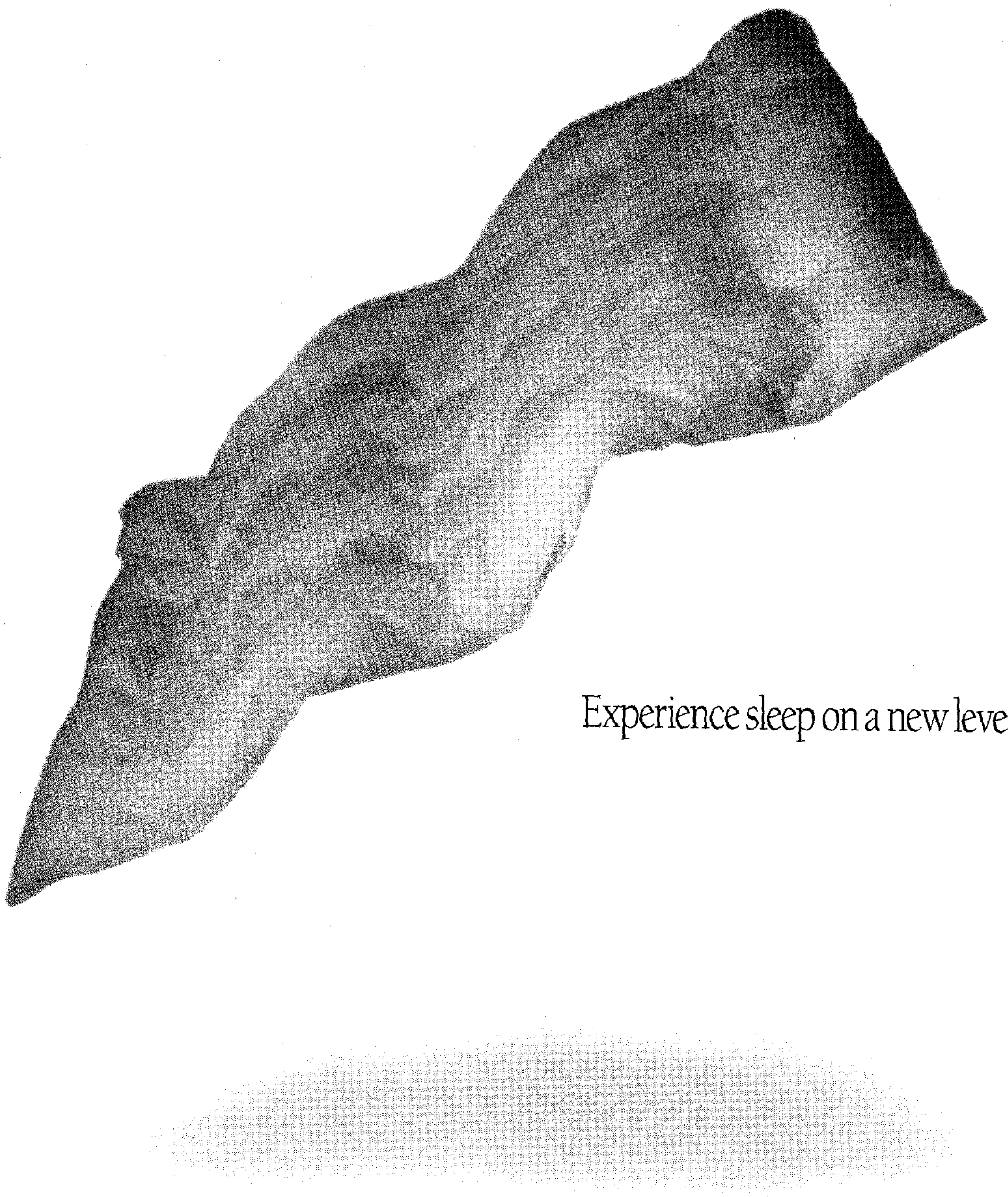

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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

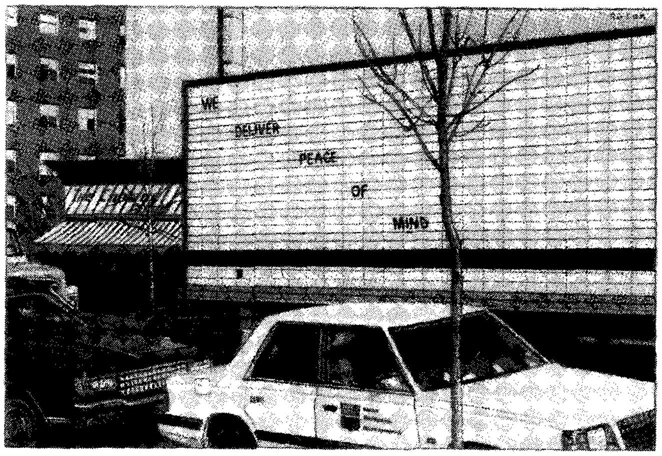
IN a move that almost no one could have imagined two years ago, the South African parliament last month repealed the notorious Population Registration Act—the law that required every newborn South African to be classified according to race. Coming after the repeal of laws that segregated public facilities and residential areas, this seemed to be the final step in the dismantling of apartheid, and the Bush Administration reacted by suggesting that it was almost time to lift the sanctions against South Africa. That reaction was not surprising. Conservatives and most Republicans have never liked the sanctions, which Congress enacted, in 1986, over President Reagan's veto. In spite of what critics have maintained, however, it appears that the sanctions have indeed been effective—that international pressure convinced many white South Africans that they needed to abandon apartheid. The question now is whether the sanctions should continue, as Senator Edward Kennedy, the Congressional Black Caucus, and others have argued, to keep Pretoria from backsliding and to continue the pressure for a South African Constitution in which blacks have the vote.

This question is being debated throughout the world, with intense lobbying of all parties by both the South African government and the country's liberation movements, which advocate the continuation of sanctions. The debate has special intensity in Africa, where attitudes toward Pretoria have been thawing in response not only to the government's internal reforms but to a startling improvement in South Africa's behavior toward its neighbors. After more than a decade of ferocious "destabilization"—a campaign that the United Nations estimates killed at least one and a half million people and cost South Africa's neighbors more than sixty billion dollars—Pretoria has apparently ended its support for the anti-government guerrillas in Mozambique and Angola, and last year it finally allowed Namibia to gain its independence. President Kenneth Kaunda, of Zambia, the leader of the seven-nation Front Line States, which have long led African opposition to apartheid, recently suggested that the group might be ready to disband.

South Africa's immediate neighbors have never been in a position to impose economic sanctions themselves. While struggling, with scant success, to reduce their dependence on the more highly developed South African economy, they have nevertheless continued to advocate sanctions. But the attitudes of some of the larger nations farther north are shifting rapidly. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, announced in April that it was considering lifting sanctions. Last month, President F. W. de Klerk became the first South African head of state allowed into Kenya since it became independent, in 1963, and it has been reported that agreements signed during his visit will increase trade twenty-fold. And now several African countries are quietly opening diplomatic relations with Pretoria—clearly hoping to develop good trade relations with South Africa, the closest thing to an industrialized country on the continent, as soon as it's politically possible.

But South Africa has economic problems of its own. Its economy needs to grow by an estimated five per cent a year to prevent its unemployment rate (now eight and a half per cent) from rising; last year, partly because of sanctions, its growth rate fell by one per cent, and the rate is not expected to rise this year. Nelson Mandela has said that "massive international intervention" will be necessary to help South Africa financially. He means the "new" South Africa, of course—one in which majority rule will prevail and the President will almost certainly be black. The issue for the United States and the rest of the developed world is whether this "intervention"—starting with the lifting of sanctions—should begin now rather than later, when further economic deterioration would require even greater amounts of financial resuscitation.

It is a tricky question, involving such complicated matters as the exact number of political prisoners in South Africa—President de Klerk claims that he has freed all but a handful, and the African National Congress insists that hundreds of them are still behind bars—and



the role of the South African government in continuing to encourage political violence between disputing black factions. Still, at this point the end of apartheid seems to be all but inevitable, and the sanctions issue to be simply one of timing: not whether they should be lifted but when. Both sides in the American sanctions debate need to adjust to this new reality, and to begin asking new questions. What, for instance, should our relationship be with a post-apartheid, possibly socialist South Africa? And will our current interest in promoting democracy and defending human rights in that country remain as keen when white-minority rule is no longer an issue?

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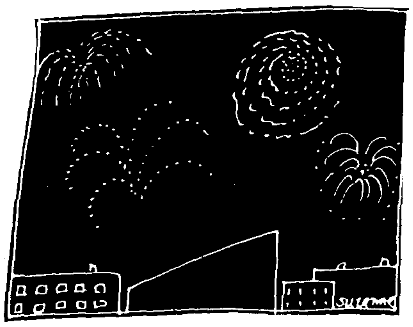
Barbecue in Berne

THE idea of throwing a party in Berne, New York—a town of about three thousand people some twenty-five miles southwest of Albany—to benefit survivors of the recent cyclone in Bangladesh came out of a conversation between Glenn Paris, a cattle farmer in Berne, and Kim Smith, who rents a house on his property. "I was filling my truck with gas, and Kim was borrowing the lawnmower," Paris said at the party, which took place on a recent Saturday afternoon. "I told her about this Oxfam fund-raising event for Bangladesh that I'd just helped with in New York City. Four hundred invitations were mailed out, and in the end thirty people attended, half of them from Oxfam." The fund-raiser generated about three thousand dollars, but Paris was left with the feeling that New York City was oversolicited, its people hardened by being hit up for several different causes at the same time. "So Kim said, '*We* should have a party.' "

The party—a picnic and barbecue—was the biggest thing to happen in Berne since the anti-rent wars of the eighteen-forties, when tenant farmers refused to pay their back rent to the heirs of Stephen Van Rensselaer and helped overthrow the patroon system. Maver Becker, a dairy farmer, took time off between his morning chores ("I cleaned six septic tanks") and his afternoon chores (baling hay and milking) to make the scene. Milton Hart, the owner of the local Agway, was there—he closes at noon on Saturdays—listening to country music and chatting with his customers at one of several picnic tables set up under a tent, which had a big blue-and-white balloon, painted to represent the Earth, suspended inside it. Don Otterness, who raises sheep and trains Border collies in nearby Altamont, was telling people about an itinerary he has planned for seven Russian sheep farmers and their interpreter, who are due in town this summer in response to an invitation he'd sent Mikhail Gorbachev a year and a half ago. Frieda Saddlemire, who taught kindergarten in Berne for thirty-four years and then retired to a part-time job in the library, accepted a helping of grilled beef from Chuck Conklin, a former pupil. Mrs. Saddlemire, who was offered a seat at every table she passed, sat down with Pat and Helen Lounsbury. Pat is a diesel mechanic; Helen teaches fourth grade at Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School, and is helping to organize a party this month for the eight-hundredth birthday of the Swiss city of Berne, for which the Berne in New York is named.

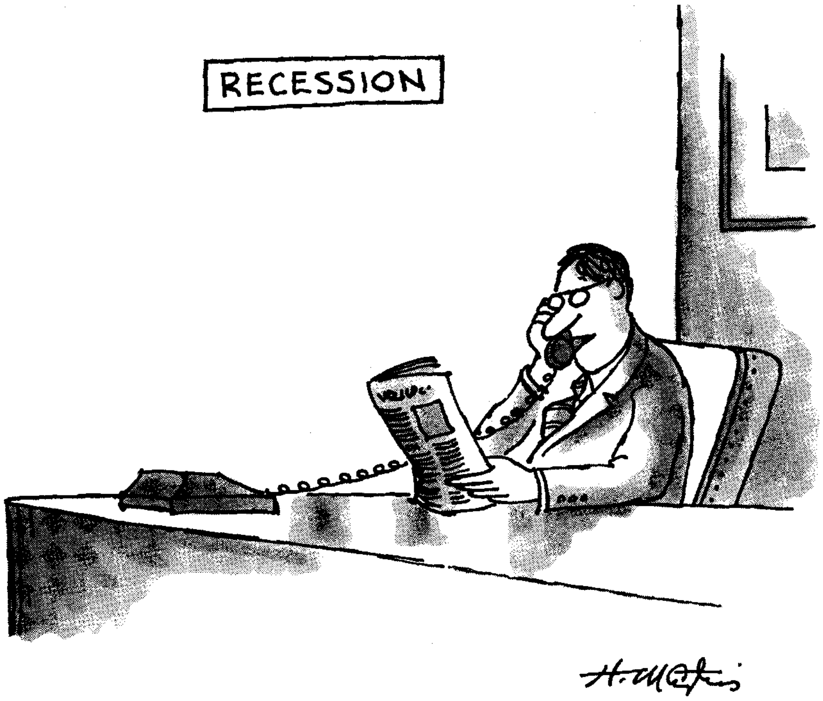
On the edge of all this, Anuradha Desai, of Oxfam's Boston office, had set up a table with stacks of literature about Oxfam, and was selling jute bags made by a business that Oxfam has supported in Bangladesh. Ms. Desai worked as an architect in India, then moved to Boston about eight years ago and went into international development. She spoke briefly to the gathering, and later presented a slide show in one of Glenn Paris's outbuildings to give the people of Berne an idea of what Oxfam would do with their money. "Is that a typical Bangladesh cow?" a man asked, on seeing a slide of an incredibly bony cow being treated by a woman whose training as a para-veterinarian Oxfam had paid for. "What's that thing on the porch?" a woman asked when Ms. Desai showed a slide of a shelter that had been designed by Oxfam to be more cyclone-resistant. The object in question, built into the porch, looked like a melted cinder block. "That is the kitchen," Ms. Desai said, and she explained that the indentations in the block were for holding bowls of water—a sort of sink—and that another block, with a hole in one side and a hole on the top, was a clay oven.



While Ms. Desai was showing some slides of silk-making, an industry that Oxfam has promoted in Bangladesh, M. A. Hannan, the consul-general of Bangladesh, who had driven up from New Rochelle with his wife, Sufia, and two of their children, disappeared momentarily, and returned wearing a long, loose white silk shirt. "This is a *kurta*," he said. When one of the women asked how to put on a sari, Mrs. Hannan, who was otherwise quite shy, spoke up. "I have a sari in the car," she said, and a few minutes later she gave a demonstration, using Glenn Paris's wife, Laura, as a model. Laura posed with her husband, who was wearing a souvenir T-shirt from Cape May printed with sketchy blue fish hanging by their tails on a line. "This is what the Indian groom wears," he said.

Paris, who was born in Great Neck and studied architecture at Carnegie-Mellon, began raising cattle in the early seventies. His parents had moved up here while he was in college, he explained—to a farm that came with all the tools and equipment. "I'm really a good stockman," he said. "I'm successful." But after twenty-one years of feeding cows the challenge was gone. "I decided I wanted to have fun and do something creditable at the same time," he said. Through a fellow cattle farmer who lives in Pennsylvania, Paris met Mike Shimkin, of Oxfam America's New York Development Committee, and Shimkin suggested that he look into Nicaragua. "Nicaragua is a cattleman's paradise," Paris said. "It's fertile, there's water—I just started drooling." He plans to develop the cattle industry in Nicaragua; he has started selling off his own cows and some of his land to raise cash for the project. "I really want to make a big impact," he said. "And you don't make an impact by accumulating money."

It was left to Mr. Hannan to make the connection between eating beef on a farm in Berne and benefitting the people of Bangladesh. "Living so far away from my country, you have come here to assist my country," he told the gathering. "You are enjoying yourself here today, and your enjoyment will bring enjoyment to my people." By the end of the day, the people of Berne had donated seven thousand dollars to the people of Bangladesh.



"Ed, this is Art Simbley over at Hollis, Bingham, Cotter & Krone. What did you get for thirty-four across, 'Persian fairy,' four letters?"

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Wear Old Clothes

FROM a press release that crossed our desk the other day we learned that La Fura dels Baus, a performance-art troupe from Barcelona, would be presenting its production "Suz/O/Suz" at the Kaufman-Astoria movie studios as part of the New York International Festival of the Arts. We read phrases like "post-Franco exaltation" and "an unpredictable and sometimes terrifying environment," but it wasn't until we got to the injunction, printed in block letters at the bottom of the page, "WEAR OLD CLOTHES" that we knew we wanted to go. In sweatsuit and sneakers, we jumped in our car and made our way to Queens, arriving at the studios to find a line of several hundred people circling the block. We joined the line, and some fans told us that several years ago the troupe was said to have been denied permission to perform in New York, because the Fire Department got wind of the company's penchant for throwing around lighted torches and other flammable materials. We found out later that the rumor was wrong. The Fire Department recently saw a video of La Fura in action and really warmed up to it. Not only did it *not* object to La Fura's appearance but it offered to station a pumper truck outside the building at a couple of early performances.

While we were in line, a young woman wearing a security badge approached the man in front of us, who was holding a walking stick. "Excuse me," she said. "I see you have a cane. I really need to see you walk. If you can't, I strongly advise you not to come in, or, if you insist, to stay in a specific place that I'll show you." She watched him take a few steps unaided, then nodded and said, "When you get to the performance, you'll understand."

At eight-fifteen—a quarter of an hour after the show was supposed to start—a man wearing a security badge was walking alongside the line saying, "No bottles inside. No food, no cans, no photography."

"The avant-garde sure has a lot of rules," a woman in the line said.

The line started to move. By eight-twenty-five, everyone had been ushered into a huge concrete shell, and the doors were closed. At one end of the shell was a stage, set up with a drum kit and other instruments, and at the other end was a wooden dais holding elaborate sound equipment, and several young men to work it. Toward the center of the space stood two tall metal towers, from which beams projected in various directions. We also spotted metal carts with meat hooks arranged in a revolving crown. Against the side walls stood two cubical tanks of water approximately four feet across. There were no seats, there was very little light, and people were clinging to each other as they walked around trying to decide where to stand. Bells began to be tapped, and then tambourines and drums. The taps built to a tinkling hailstorm. Suddenly, the room went black. "Freak me out, man," someone said. We heard the sounds of crickets, of kissing, and of voices ululating. The lights came on, and we could see ropes being lowered from holes in the ceiling. Soon ten men wearing shirts, ties, G-strings, and sneakers were clambering down the ropes to the floor.

During the next hour, the men engaged in the following activities: they revved up a go-cart and drove it through the crowd, forcing people to scatter; they revved up a bladeless chain saw and ran through the crowd holding it out like a weapon, forcing people to scatter; they lugged and lobbed various objects—such as metal gas cannisters—through the crowd, forcing people to scatter; they staged a parade of shopping carts containing human beings and unattached parts of children's dolls; they hung animal entrails from the meat hooks and then attacked each other with the entrails; they bit off gobbets of raw meat and then guzzled basins of red liquid that seemed to be blood; some of them stuffed themselves into the tanks of water and breathed through hoses leading to oxygen reserves, and others stuffed heads of escarole into the tanks on top of them; some of them hoisted others by ropes to the tops of the towers and then menaced them with torches; they dropped torches within spitting distance of the crowd; they exploded sacks of paint and powder over each other; they played the drums, an electric guitar, and a saxophone in such a way that the sound permeated the body of everyone in the room. The decibel level rose. The heat intensified. The air reeked of gasoline, stage smoke, and burning pitch. By nine-forty, much of the floor was covered with puddles of ooze, in which one could distinguish sawdust, flour, pieces of watermelon, lettuce leaves, and raw flesh, among other things. The lights went out again, and a joyous roar went up from the crowd. "Suz/O/Suz" was a hit! As we burst through the studio's rear doors into the night air, a passerby said, "Oh, feel the heat coming out of there."

We looked at our sneakers: they were stippled with red goo. Our sweatsuit smelled like insecticide. Back in the car, we took out our press folder, riffled through it, and found these bits of information: according to Martin E. Segal, the chairman of the New York International Festival of the Arts, La Fura dels Baus is one of the offerings that are "intended to foster the kind of international ties which can lead to ongoing exchanges among arts communities around the world"; "suz/o/suz" are nonsense syllables; the name La Fura dels Baus means "vermin from the sewers."

"What did you think of this?" we asked someone we knew.

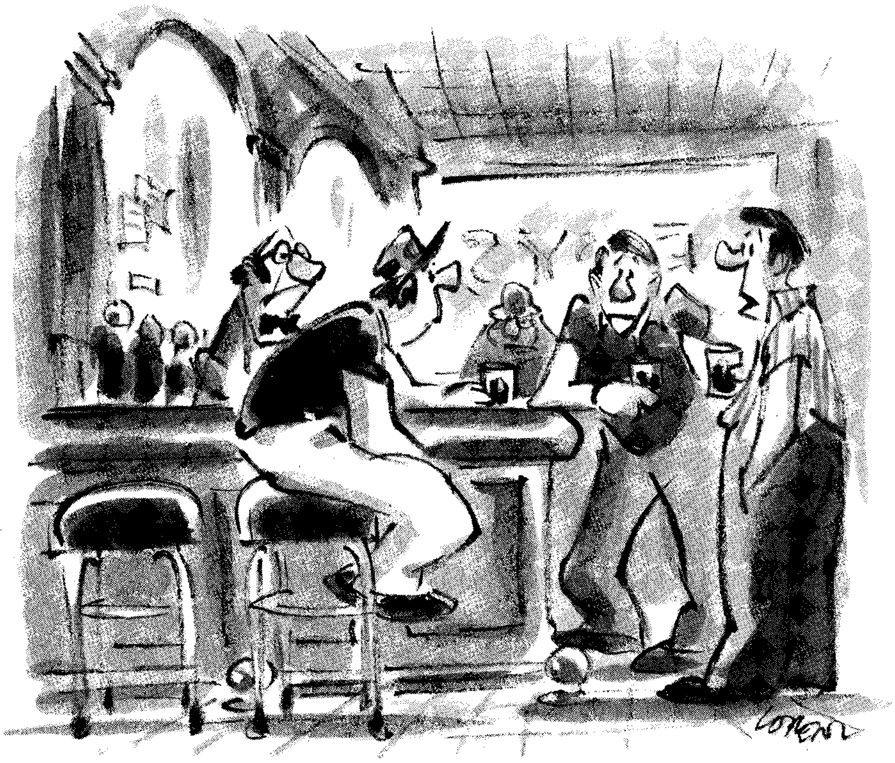
"I can't say I liked it," she said. "But it was important that I went."

School Days

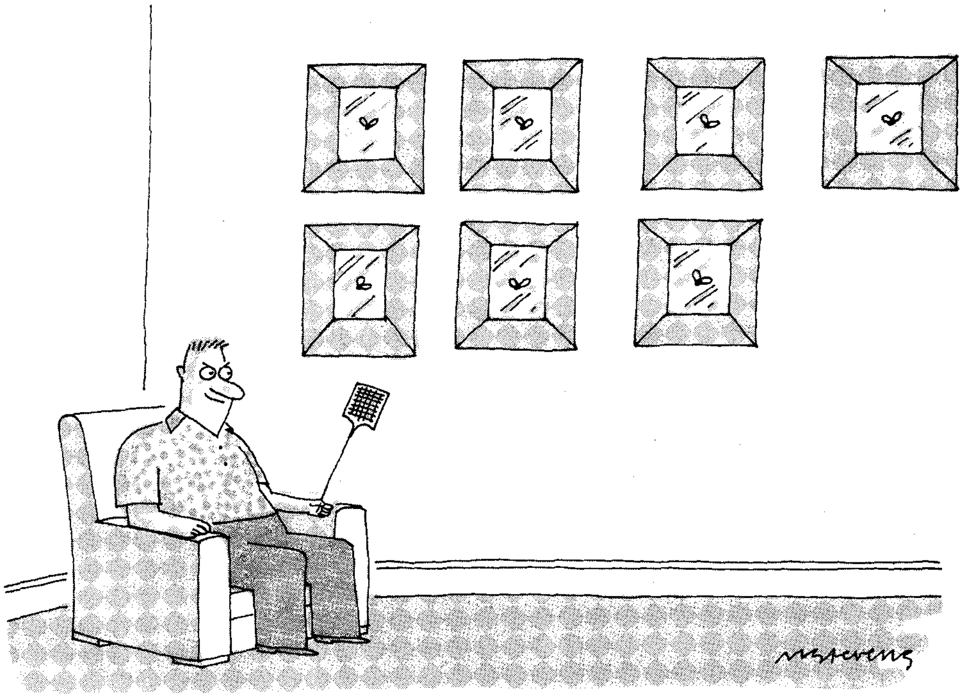
ALTHOUGH last Saturday's sale of rock-and-roll memorabilia at Sotheby's received a lot of pre-auction attention, including slightly facetious articles in the Friday *News* and *Times*, the papers mostly concentrated on lots like No. 485, an Elvis Presley cape, and No. 440, an acoustic guitar autographed by John Lennon. Nonetheless, many ardent followers of the history of American culture believed that the most significant and revealing lots in the sale would surely be Nos. 622, 627, 645, 649, and 653, each of which contained at least one important example of the high-school homework of the pioneering rockabilly singer and composer Buddy Holly. According to the catalogue, Lot No. 627 included a two-page English report, a biology test from 1953, and a math assignment; Lot No. 645 included a social-studies report entitled "Industries of the Gulf Coastal Plain"; and Lot No. 649 included a two-page civics report entitled "My Idea of a Good Sport." Lot No. 653 promised to be the most significant of all, for in addition to "An Outline of Laboratory Technique for Raiding and Studying Bacteria" it included Buddy's book report on the life and work of Robert Frost.

On Friday afternoon, Sotheby's put the Holly material on exhibition, and various dealers and collectors, along with spectators who were just interested in the history of American homework, gathered to examine it. "Most of the material has been released by the Holley family," Craig Inciardi, a cataloguer in the Collectibles Department, explained. (Scholarly note: The surviving members of the Holley family—Buddy, of course, was killed in 1959, in just about the most famous plane crash in American history—spell their name with an "e"; an error on an early contract misspelled Buddy's name, and he let it stay that way throughout his career.) "They seem to have kept everything, and what's nice is that they didn't seem to keep it because Buddy was a star. They kept it all just because it was Buddy's."

Sotheby handlers passed the Holly lots—each carefully sealed in a clear-plastic envelope—around for inspection, and potential buyers were allowed to open the envelopes. Buddy Holly's homework would lighten the heart of Allan Bloom, since it conclusively demonstrates his thesis that American educational standards have pretty much gone down the tubes in the last thirty years, but it might weigh on Bloom's heart a little, too, since it conclusively disproves his thesis that a love of rock and roll is incompatible with great homework. Buddy, it turns out, was a homework whiz. One lot, No. 649, contains *forty-five pages* of homework—more homework, it could well be, than Guns N' Roses have completed in their entire careers. And not gut homework, either. In Lot No. 653, for instance, Buddy was asked to "list some of the contributions of the following ancient peoples to our life today. A. Phoenicians, B. Greeks, C. Romans." And Buddy did: seafaring, democracy, engineering. Another time, Buddy was asked to "contrast the motives of England, France and Spain for colonization in the new world."



"We thought we were going out with Laverne and Shirley, but it turned out to be Thelma and Louise."



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Buddy's analysis: "Spain hoped to land great riches, and so did France. England, by contrast, was over-populated and wanted someplace to put the people." On the math-and-science front, Buddy noted that "the sum of all the angles around a point on one side of a straight line is a straight angle"—news to Keith Richards, we bet. In his notebooks Buddy compiled a reading list ("Battle of Blenheim," "Spires of Oxford Town," "The Bells," "Cadet Prayer," and the "New Illiad") and on another page he wrote, with brave, if somewhat cryptic, candor, that "reproduction is the seventh and last function of life."

Still, the masterpiece of Buddy Holly's homework is clearly the essay on Robert Frost. The catalogue failed to make it entirely clear that Lot No. 653 included both Buddy's rough notes on Frost—what scholars would call the spoiled papers—and the beginning of the finished book report. It's a first-rate study in book-report process. First, Buddy assembles his notes, and organizes his material:

> Buddy Holley / Robert Frost
> Notes
>
> BORN in San Francisco, March 26, 1875
> CAME from a long line of New Englanders
> WHEN ten years old father died. . . .
> ROBERT disliked grammar school but found high school more interesting. Life in college and some required courses he didn't like.

Then Buddy organizes his notes into a smooth and engaging narrative:

> Robert Frost (by Buddy Holley)
>
> Robert Lee Frost, one of America's greatest poets, has been the favorite of many people since his first poems were published. Although he was born in California, his ancestors had lived in New England since 1632. He had no outstanding line of ancestors. He sprang from a simple family of New England farmers, He must have had the instinct of this farming in his blood, because all of his poems were of the outdoors, and about nature.

Would Prince have seen the beauty of that "sprang"? Would Madonna? Not a chance. And anyone who thought that Buddy left those lessons in thoughtful and stylish sentence construction behind when he became a rock and roller had only to look a little farther, at the letters in Lots No. 652 and 626, to see how good book-report construction prepares you for stardom. Writing from New York to his pal Terry Noland several years after graduation, Buddy clearly remembers the lessons learned in English class at Lubbock High. The letter reads, in part:

> DEAR TERRY,
>
> I was glad to get your letter, and I'm sorry that I haven't had a chance to answer it before now. It's just that I've been pretty busy getting my apartment fixed. . . . You mentioned that you were coming into New York soon. I would appreciate it if you could let me know when, as soon as you know for sure. I'm leaving on tour Jan. 23rd, so I hope you'll be here before then, as I would like to be at your next session.

On Saturday, most of the morning at Sotheby's was devoted to Beatles and Elvis memorabilia. By afternoon, when the Buddy Holly memorabilia came around, the crowd in the hall had thinned to the serious Buddy collectors. It is sad to report that such relatively insignificant stuff as the Buddy Holly Stage Jacket and Shirt (Lot No. 631) sold for five thousand two hundred and twenty-five dollars and the Buddy Holly Stage Linen Suit (Lot No. 640) went for a thousand eight hundred and seventy dollars, while the homework proved a drug on the market. Lot No. 653, which included the Frost essay, drew a top bid of only six hundred and fifty, and had to be bought back in; that is, it was kept by the auctioneer, for return to the owner.

Afterward, several of the sellers and bidders discussed the failure of the Buddy Holly homework to hold the market. When one spectator suggested that it was simply one more proof of the decline in American intellectual standards, Sarah Shinn, the auctioneer, disagreed, and put it down to the whims of the market. "Rock-and-roll memorabilia isn't like a Tiffany flatware service, with stable bidders and a predictable price," she said. "It can go over big or bomb—it's unpredictable. This material tends to attract people you don't normally see at an auction, and prices fluctuate a lot. And then Buddy Holly memorabilia is more valuable if it's directly related to his music."

One of the dealers who had bought some of the Holly material agreed. "Part of it is that a lot of people buy this kind of material just for the autographs, and you'll notice that a lot of the homework wasn't signed, or else was signed 'Buddy Holley,' with an 'e,'" he said. "The big market for this kind of stuff right now is the restaurant and bar collectors—I noticed the Hard Rock Cafe people here today—and they want a suit of clothes or something very visible. It's hard to really display homework. Also, there's a lot of homework on the market right now. Last year, the Holley family sort of started flooding the market with Buddy's homework. The family have sold a lot of the estate, but they keep putting more on the market, so people are wary until they figure out how much more homework there is to come. Buddy was a good student. He was just one of those guys who *did* their homework."

BODY OF WORK

I AM pregnant the first time I'm asked to do a training session on corporations. "And we want it on tape," said Martin. He's a musician, but he works part-time coördinating the firm's training program for paralegals. There are so many of us now—over a hundred—and the new ones need basic stuff (cite-checking, how to use the library), while the old ones like me need enrichment sometimes, skills-sharpening, keeping at the cutting edge. Martin's a busy guy.

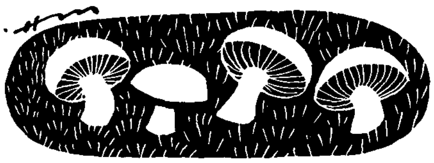
Once a month, Martin holds a lunch session called Continuing Paralegal Education, which an attorney comes to, or a senior paralegal, or anyone Martin can charm or flatter or simply pester into giving a talk about some area of specialization. Whoever it is, there's usually a camera rolling so the session can be used again—the tape checked out by people who missed the meeting—or else shown, years later, with a dash of pomp and a witty introduction from Martin, over plates of sandwiches, pasta salad, or whatever the caterers of the future may be dishing up.

The prospect worries me. This is my second child, so I know I tend to worry when I'm pregnant, but the taping would worry me anytime. Not only will I have to be good but I'll have to be good beyond the needs of the moment—articulate, and polished to a high gleam, a beacon for future viewers. I see before me, already, their trusting, upturned faces.

I work hard on my talk. I'll be talking about how to set up a corporation (nothing fancy, just plain vanilla, for-profit) but in addition to the specifics (like the pros and cons of corporate seals, or how to break through the almost constant busy signal at the Secretary of State's office to check the availability of a corporate name) I want to talk, more generally, about stuff I like to think about. How words become things, how the stamping of one document in the Secretary of State's office suddenly makes a whole new entity whose existence is "perpetual." Where words come from, how "corporation," with its armature of laws and cases and precedents, its quasi-mythical status as an "artificial person" with "perpetual" existence, emerged into history naked as any creature, out of "corpus," the body. How "corporation" used to mean, among other things, a protruding stomach, as in Smollett: "Sirrah! My corporation is made up of good wholesome English fat." But, on the other hand, from the sixteenth century drifts a more ethereal music, a word for the fusing of Christian believers into one mystical body of Christ, one "corporation." Tricky business, then—comprehending this word we use, are used by, in the course of earning our livings, living our lives—watching it stagger through a clumsy dialectic between the sacred and the profane, the abstract and the concrete, mysticism and lard.

And I think hard about what I'll wear. Not that there's a lot of choice, between the couple of good maternity dresses I'd bought new for client conferences or lunches and the more seasoned jumpers, skirts, and smocks I'd borrowed from friends and friends of friends. I decide pretty quickly on a dress that is both "nice" and laden with good karma, lent to me by my friend, Beth, who got it from a friend of hers who had won it in a drawing at some fancy department store, I. Magnin, maybe, or Saks. Beth told me when she brought me the dress on a hanger one night that it was her favorite dress when she was pregnant, and it became, immediately, mine. It's made of soft, narrow-wale corduroy, a rich wine color, and it's cut as a roomy shift that seems to swing when you walk—not blatantly, but like a quiet, encouraging tune someone is playing just for you, for your body outside and in. It's a dress that strangers say nice things about, that keeps me company on bad days, and as I imagine it before the video camera I know that my dress, at least, will do fine.

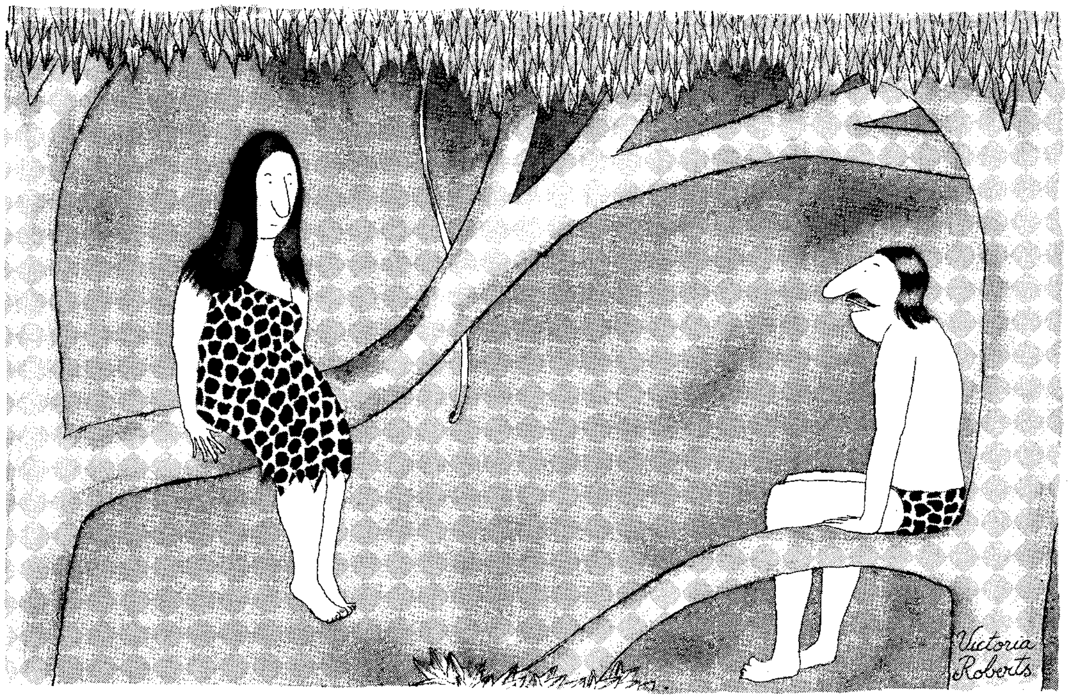
And so do I, as far as I can tell. (Martin is reassuring, as always; it's part of his job.) Also, there's pleasure, after all, in pulling together some of what I know, in defining it, wiping a fogged lens clear. Along the way I get to tell one of my favorite cautionary tales, which I can get away with in my role as a very senior paralegal, thirty-six and with the firm for twelve years. (This is a young profession; that's part of its interest—we shape it as we go.)



I like this story as a teaching tool. I hate it because it's about the death of Katie, whom I loved. Even six years ago, when she started at the firm, she seemed a kid to me, not just because she was in her mid-twenties but because she brought a particular freshness to her work, energy coupled with insouciance. She would work hard on an incorporation, or harder on a closing, days and nights in a conference room stacked high with documents, but you always sensed she was there solely because she chose to be—for the overtime, mainly, or because she liked the other paralegals working on the deal, or simply because she'd decided this was how she was going to spend her evenings for a while. Whereas with me and most of my other friends at the firm there was something else at stake—some key part of our self-respect that turned on doing things right, getting every detail of a project, every comma, precisely in its immutable place.

Katie danced right past that kind of perfectionism—she was a dancer, I found out when I started getting to know her; she took classes in jazz and modern dance several evenings a week. She had a mass of brown hair, and a long, lithe body that always seemed to fit better into turtlenecks, denim skirts, and clogs than into tailored suits; her cheekbones lifted like birds' wings beneath clear gray eyes. She must have looked me over pretty shrewdly, me and my wardrobe that veered crazily from suits and heels for meeting clients to long skirts and flats for days when I planned to hole up in my office, work on a private-offering memo, and pretend to myself I'd never left home. One day, after we'd known each other six months or so, Katie appeared in my office with a dress pattern and sample swatches of fabric. She did a lot of sewing for herself, and she said she wanted to make me a dress as a present, *what did I think of this pattern?*

I liked it fine. It was simple, pretty, didn't take itself too seriously—a dress that looked like a dress rather than a tool for career building. We didn't talk about a trade, but I wondered if this was Katie's way of thanking me for the help I was starting to give her with her



"You're awfully tame this evening."

writing. She'd been having trouble with the scrupulous precision the attorneys required in everything we wrote, even apparently simple cover letters, and I'd offered to work with her. I was excited at the chance to spend time at my job talking with a friend about writing, but a little daunted by that I sensed might be a long, difficult task.

Only I never got to try, because one morning Katie got out of bed, slumped to the floor, and died. Just like that, as far as anyone could tell, though a number of experts did their best to say more. There was the usual coroner's report, and then a second, at the family's request; both gave the cause of death as "unknown." Katie lived in an apartment by herself, so there was no one to offer any clues.

When the news reached the office, I went out as soon as I could. Walking with a friend, pacing, looping the downtown streets, we hunted explanations, stunned by the way Katie'd gone, like a door slammed shut. It was somehow consoling, in the shadow of her death, to come face-to-face with a certified mystery.

Of course, most of Katie's story didn't make it into my talk. For this audience, I had to skate quickly onto a firmer surface: the legal dilemma posed by the fact that Katie had vanished not only as a person but as an essential legal implement—the sole incorporator of BZ, Inc. BZ was a corporation formed a few days before Katie's death, when on behalf of a client she had prepared the Articles of Incorporation from one of our standard master forms, signed them, and sent them off to the capital for filing.

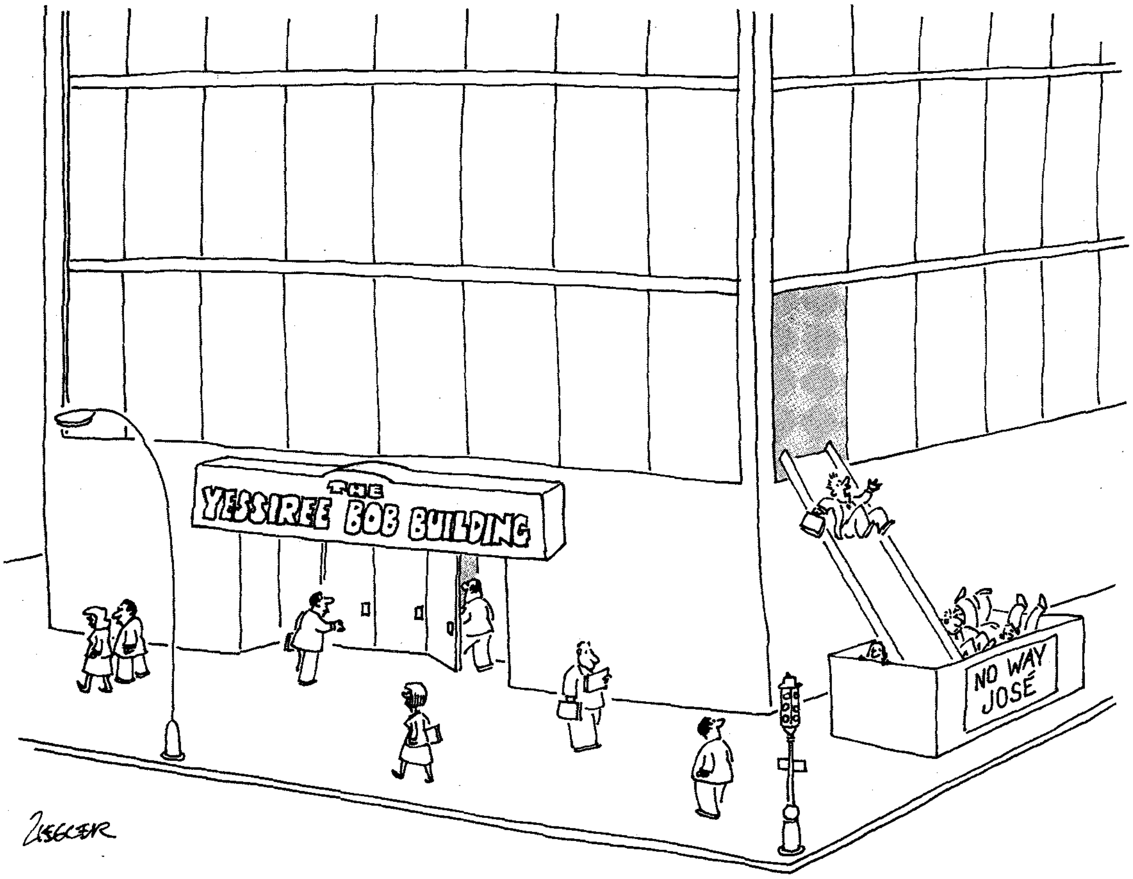
A perfectly routine job—the bread and butter of a corporate legal assistant—and the Articles were, routinely, accepted for filing and promptly returned to the office, stamped by the Secretary of State's office. But by the time the documents arrived at our office Katie wasn't there: BZ had begun its life just as Katie had ended hers. Which, I pointed out to my audience, left the corporation stranded, a disembodied "creature of law." Since the Articles had named no directors, the incorporator was the only person of record who could take action to appoint board members, who could then approve bylaws, appoint officers, open a bank account, get down to whatever business BZ was supposed to be doing.

The cleanest solution, it was decided—after considerable pondering by one of the partners—was to get BZ dissolved by a judge acting with the coöperation of Katie's estate. BZ without Katie was nothing, the ghost of a venture, some frail ambition. I never learned what the business was to be, or whether it prospered in a second incarnation. Maybe the entrepreneurial thrust behind BZ was more enduring than the plans for my dress, which I inherited as a stack of petal-weight paper and some pieces of flowered cloth, cut by Katie into shapes ready to sew together. About the time BZ was dissolved I hunted up a dressmaker, since I barely sew, and asked her to complete the work Katie had started. She accepted the assignment grudgingly, with a sour half smile (maybe she disliked taking over somebody else's work), but brought me the dress a week later. I did wear it once or twice, but it never felt or looked quite right—a little tight in the shoulders, a little prim, nothing at all like Katie.

I WANT him to leave my office right now. He is too young, stands too close to me, looks me too easily in the eye, is too sure—that he needs only one incorporator, that anything more is superfluous. A "baby associate" (what we call the new lawyers), fresh-faced, straight out of Harvard or Stanford, clad in the shining raiment of his irrefutable logic.

So I explain to him, briefly, about Katie, though I don't use her name. This is just a case history from a while back, one of those weird but telling legal anecdotes. He goes on standing in my office. So I simply suggest, in very different words, that if he screws up on this it'll be his ass on the line, because I'll never back him up, and he stops and remembers that I've been around awhile, that people trust me whereas he just walked in the door, and he shrugs and agrees to a second incorporator: "Three's ridiculous, Deborah, for Christ's sake, but I guess I can live with two."

A MONTH later I'm driving through a pouring March rain, past the malls and condos of the suburbs to Tom Heaney's funeral. Heaney the real-estate partner, dead in his



fifties of cancer, Heaney the witty, plain-talking, Jesuit-schooled Irishman, balding, a little slack-bellied, but his eyes blue and keen. Heaney was the guy I'd go see when I wanted to find out what was really going on—"This is what the documents say, Tom, right now, but how do things really work in practice?" Then we'd revise, make the words walk slowly on the slippery trail. I was learning to keep my eyes open. Next to the couch where clients sat in Tom's office there was a real parking meter.

Tom himself didn't seem to sit still for long. He came to the firm as a "lateral"—already a partner at another big firm—and from the beginning I thought of him as someone in motion. People said he'd felt hemmed in at his old firm, though I never asked him why he'd left; I only noticed how his eyes darted among the faces gathered at a conference table, how he'd take in, easy as oxygen, what each party brought to the table, what each wanted to take away—all of the talking points, deal points, sticking points, the ones that could kill the deal. At the funeral, person after person stood up in the crowded church to tell their memories of him, but mine was one I couldn't speak: Tom at the Christmas party one year dancing fast, tie loosened, with Rochelle—another paralegal he worked with—to "I Wanna Be Sedated" from a friend's collection of new-wave tapes. Even now, the memory moves too quickly, like film escaping through a speeded-up projector, so that Tom and Rochelle are all blurred elbows and knees—no faces, just fast dancing.

A few years ago, Tom helped me with a sentence. It doesn't seem like much: "The terms of this Agreement, and any amendment hereto, may be confirmed by any single Trustee, and each Trustee is authorized and empowered to execute and deliver all certificates or other documents as may from time to time be required to evidence such confirmation." But what I like about this sentence is precisely its modesty, its utility, the way it leaped from Tom's mind to meet a particular need, soothe the uneasiness of a particular title company. I remember going into his office, by luck catching him alone, and how he thought for a moment and then wrote in pencil, in a silvery, clear hand, the sentence we wound up adding to our standard group-trust agreement, so that whenever I prepared one after that and passed by that sentence in the master I would think of Tom. I like the beauty of his sentence, a well-made tool—the way it pivots at the center on the authority of a single person, closing the first clause, opening the second. And I will always see his sentence in pencil, writing itself perpetually as suggestion rather than pronouncement, and engraved in nothing.

I'M watching the videotape of my talk. Martin has lent it to me with apologies; there's something wrong, inexplicably, with the audio, and he feels bad that after all my work the tape isn't good enough to show at future sessions. I tell him that's O.K.—as long as my talk was useful to the people who were there, and anyway I kind of enjoyed it.

So I'm watching now, curious—I've never seen myself on TV—and at first I don't see what Martin means. I'm just relieved that I basically like the person on the screen: she seems to know what she's talking about without getting too heavy-handed about it, smiles a lot (maybe too much?), definitely touches her hair too much, smooths it—a mannerism; I decide right away to stop that.

Then the words begin to fade. I'm talking, and smiling, and then I'm talking very quietly, and then I turn my face to include some other listeners around the conference table and I'm moving my lips around silence. Then I smile again, turn my head another way, and the words come back, surging, receding, as if a wind were blowing through the tape. We are sitting around a table talking about corporations and suddenly we aren't; we are only mouth, hair, eyes, my dress the color of wine, somebody's sleeve, fingers, a smile, a coffee cup lifted, a head nodded. Somebody raises a hand.

—JUDITH SMALL

LAKE NATASINK

WHEN Patty comes in to work on her second-to-last day, Jack is sitting in her office. In her chair, naturally. The space isn't really an office, just a partitioned area in the big messy room they use for Administration. Her stall, she's always called it. "Look hard," Jack says. "This is what you leave behind when you abandon Manhattan."

"How can I bear it?" Patty says.

"Don't beg any of us to send you cockroaches," Jack says. "Don't call any of us in the middle of the night and plead with us to talk dirty."

Carmen comes in from Client Records. "Look at her," Jack says, pointing to Patty. "Miss Rustic. Miss Farmer Jones." Patty is wearing a purple leopard-print turtleneck, the same sort of thing she always wears. So what?

"They got wild animals in the country," Carmen says. "Right?"

"Not as wild as me," Patty says. "Jack thinks I might be too much for them upstate."

"I hope so," Carmen says, and leaves with a folder.

"What will you eat?" Jack says. "Velveeta? Twinkies? Spam? Go ahead, tell me Spam is great. Baked with canned pineapple and Karo syrup."

"Spam is great," Patty says.

"You know how much weight you'll put on?" Jack says. "In a week you'll look like a Twinkie yourself."

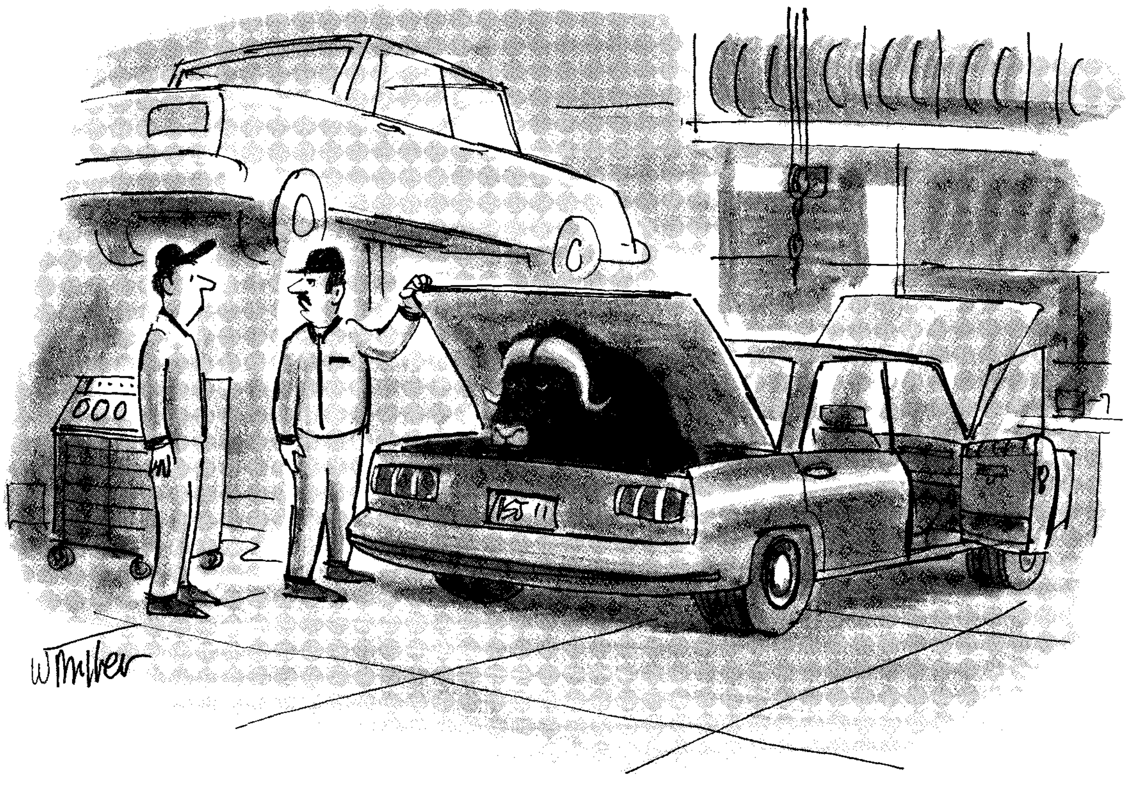
Being Jack, he is looking for the spot where he'll get to her, but he hasn't found it yet. Weight isn't it. When she first moved in with Charlotte, Jack made fat jokes every time he saw Patty eat a cookie. She was going to get fat from Charlotte's cooking, he decided. Overstuffed on pâté and profiteroles—Charlotte, Patty's lover, is a trained chef. Patty isn't fat. She is five-two and weighs a hundred and four pounds, sometimes a hundred and five. Her hair, which is in a crewcut, is currently hennaed a winy color. She has holes pierced for three earrings in one ear, and she uses them all. She's forty-two—O.K., a little old for that sort of thing—but she's not ready to change. She looks fine.

It's Jack who doesn't look so good. He looks craggy and blown out, like an old junkie, which he is. He never did look that great. He and Patty have known each other since they were both in their twenties. He was notably unvain about himself then—at least about his looks—but he could get women when he wanted to. Actually, anybody could, at that time. But he and Patty were never a couple. They were cronies.

Jack liked to dare Patty to do things: he would goad or mock or coax or lure her if she tried to turn back. It was exciting—you never knew what you would end up doing if you were with Jack. Some things she would rather forget, some things she remembers with amazement, and, probably, pride. They were the most she would do, the furthest she would go. At the time she was grateful to Jack.

For many years they didn't see each other. Jack was in Miami, she was in New York. He had a family, a whole other life, in Florida. When he called her she wasn't always happy to hear from him. His voice on the line always startled her: "This is Jack, the one and only." And now he and Charlotte don't get along—and who can blame Charlotte? Patty does blame Charlotte sometimes. But their baby, Wyona, loves him. Wyona shrieks with excitement when Jack comes into the room. She holds out her arms—she wants him to swing her around, to hold her upside down by her feet. Sometimes he tosses her up and catches her. Charlotte can't stand it. Wyona squeals and laughs. She begs for more. "Airplane girl," Jack says. "Little flying woman."

At work people seem to like him so far. Patty got him this job. He's training to be an assistant counsellor in the drug-treatment program at the Center. He has seven years' sobriety, which counts as a credential here. Patty guesses he's lying about when his last lapse was, but they probably know that. If they don't who does? Patty herself is only the office manager, at second remove from what she calls the real dirty work of the Center. If the place weren't so under-



"Tell Mrs. Pomeroy we've found the source of that strange hint of musk."

ON A BEACH

The sea breaks on the sands, I listen to its rustle and close my eyes.
Here on this European shore, in the fullness of summer, after the big wars of the century.
The brows of new generations are innocent and yet marked.
Often in a crowd a face resembling—He could be one of the destroyers
But does not know who he would have been had he been born earlier,
Chosen, as was his father, though unfulfilled.
Under my eyelids I keep their eternally young cities.
Screams of their music, the rock pulsating, I am searching for the core of my thought.
Is it only this, inexpressible by any means: what's left is to mumble every day, "Ah"—
The irretrievable, indifferent, eternal passing away?
Is it pity and anger, because after ecstasy and despair and hope beings similar to gods are carried off by oblivion?
Because in sea rustlings and silences nothing is heard about a division into the just and the wicked?
Or have I been pursued by images of them when they were alive in a day, an hour, a moment under the skies?
So much of all that and now the peace of defeat, for my verse preserved so little?
Or perhaps I have only heard my whisper: "Epilogue, epilogue."
Prophecies of my youth fulfilled but not in a way they expected.
The morning is back and flowers are gathered in the cool of the garden by a loving hand.
A flock of pigeons soars above the valley. It turns and changes color flying along the mountains.
Same glory of ordinary days and milk in a jug and crisp cherries.
And yet down below, at the very brushwood of existence, it lurks and crawls,
Recognizable by the fluttering fear of little creatures, it, implacable, steel-gray nothingness.

I open my eyes, a red sail leans on a wave which is blue in the gaudy sun.
Just before me a boy tests water with his foot, and suddenly I notice he is not like others.
Not a cripple, yet he has the movements of a cripple and the head of a retarded child.
His father looks after him, that handsome man sitting over there on a boulder.
A sensation of my neighbor's misfortune pierces me and as I think of those two I begin to comprehend
In this dark age the bond of our common fate and compassion more real than I was inclined to confess.

—Czeslaw Milosz

(*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.*)

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funded and chaotic it would be a calming job.

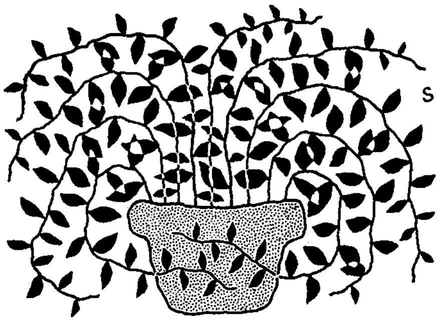
Anyway, it's Patty's next-to-last day. All week she has been forgetting that she's leaving—a sign, she assumes, that she doesn't want to go. It's Lake Natasink, New York, that she and Charlotte and the baby are moving to; for days Jack has been calling it Lake Kitchen Sink. Patty tries to think of the house they'll be living in—the front porch, the view of fields and hills from the back. The reasons she wants to be there. The quiet, the relief. When Jack says she'll go nuts from boredom, she says, "I can't wait."

"Tell me what you'll do with yourself all day," Jack says. "Check to see if your manure pile is decomposing? Read seed catalogues?"

In fact, Patty will have plenty to do—she has a job at a state agency in Albany (there's more substance abuse up there than you'd think) and she has Wyona. Also, the house needs work. Maybe Jack still thinks of her as idle and slow. When she was young she could sleep till two in the afternoon, after a late night. She could read one page of the paper, eat a chocolate doughnut, and feel the day had been well spent. Her whole sense of time was different then. She wore tiny silk tank tops in the dead of winter, heavy cowboy boots in August.

"A lot of people don't want to be in New York," Jack says. "You have to have guts to stay here. You might like it better upstate."

"Thank you so much," Patty says. She reminds Jack that when he lived in Miami he couldn't believe someone like herself still put up with lousy winter weather and no place to park and no beach. Why didn't she move down there, he wanted to know, what did she have in New York that was so great?



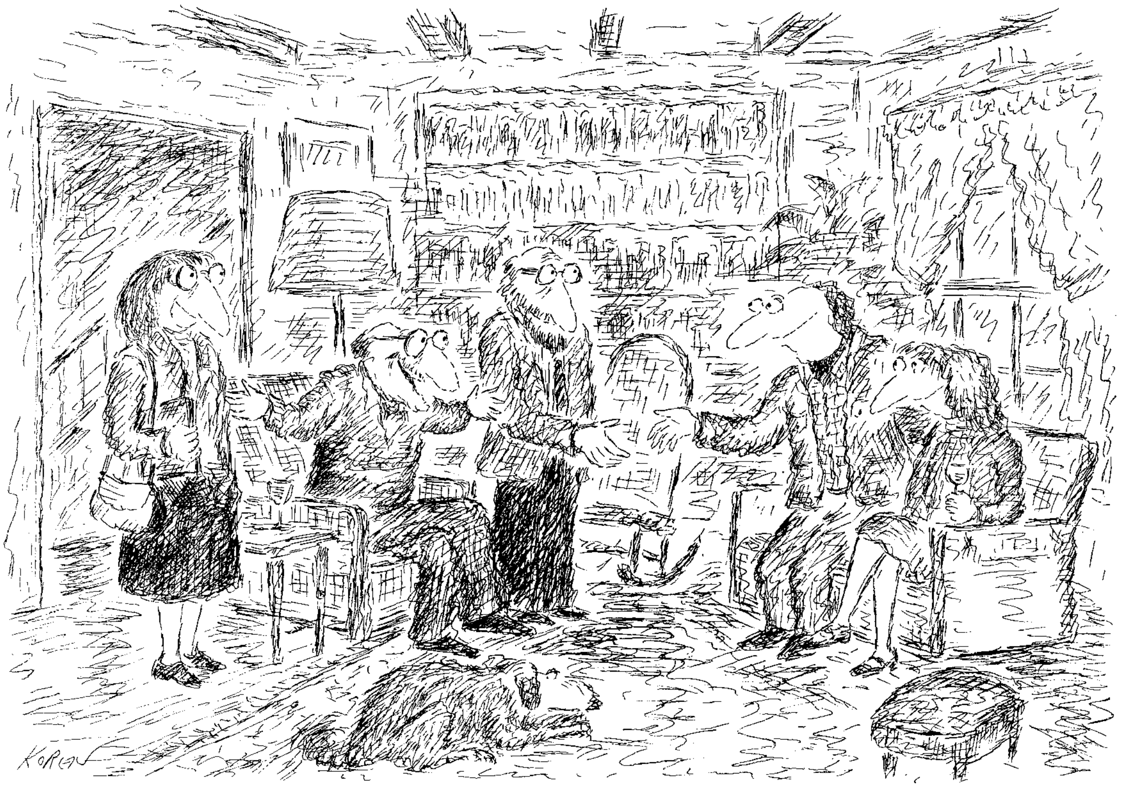
Patty still has the photos he sent her: Jack waving a conch shell, Jack with a banana in his ear, Jack pretending to scale a palm tree. He worked for a while as a disco manager, a job that got interrupted when he beaned himself falling off a pier at midnight. Sometimes Patty tells him his head is still flat on one side. "It's my hip haircut," he says, "copied by millions." Actually he is quite bald now.

But now Jack likes New York again. Now he wants her to be in New York as long as he is. How come he can't have an opinion, Patty asks, without selling it to everyone he knows?

Anyhow, if I were like you, Patty thinks, I'd be cooking chili over a hot plate in a residential hotel, how great is that? She has said this to him—they have said everything to each other—but at the moment she is thinking she will miss him.

"Hey, Jack," Patty says. "Move up there yourself. Get into goatherding or something."

"I've been low," Jack says, "but not



"Alexa here is my sixty-eight-year-old, and Nat here is my seventy-two-year-old."

• •

that low." But his face brightens. It's always nice to be invited. In his own way he looks up to her and Charlotte, the happy homemakers.

Patty feels glad that at least she's leaving Jack in this job, useful work in a place he won't quit. There are a lot of crappy agencies, but Patty thinks this isn't one of them. Legit people work here, and Patty has seen some whacked-out clients get better. You can't ever guess which ones: the dark horses surprise you; the favorites fade out.

While she's talking to Jack a workman comes in to move her desk. They'll be reshuffling offices after she leaves. "What the hell are you doing?" Jack says. "She's still working. You want her to sit on the floor?"

The man is lifting the desk, papers and all. Maybe the young lady can sit in the reception area instead.

"Come back Monday," Patty says. "O.K.?"

"Get out of here," Jack says. "I mean it."

For a moment Patty thinks a little brawl is going to break out. The workman is getting red. But he drops the desk hard, acts disgusted with them, and walks out. Patty's always liked it when Jack gets chivalrous.

"You're not fucking gone yet," he says.

THE rest of the day Patty works on making lists for her successor. Her job has mostly involved billing the clients' insurance companies, if they have them. Someone has to pay for this.

The lists keep getting longer, and Patty is tired by the time she goes home. In their apartment Charlotte has the boxes set out for packing. There is maybe a square foot of empty floor space, and one of the cats is already hiding in panic. They have three cats, and a dog called Freddie. The baby, Wyona, is eleven months old and just starting to walk. One glance at their apartment—even without the boxes—and it's obvious they should move to the country, or somewhere.

Wyona loves the empty boxes. Charlotte has tipped one on its side for her, and she's busy crawling in and out of it. "Wyona, the famous infant explorer," Charlotte says. The baby's mother, who had her for the first three months of her life, named her Wyona, and they promised to keep the name. Wyona's mother is black, and her father is Korean. Jack has pointed out that this girl will have a lot of explaining to do in kindergarten about how those two white dykes are Mom and Mom. That and getting people to spell her name right (Wyona Szasznec-Stein)—this kid has a lot of challenges ahead of her.

You wouldn't know it, watching Wyona clamber around the boxes. Seeing her makes Patty think about the blind stupidity of youth, the cheerful stubbornness of it. She is remembering the year she and Jack and a lot of other people used to go to Central Park at dawn after they'd been up all night. They walked down the paths in the dim sepia light; they watched the sky get brighter behind the bushes. It *was* beautiful, probably. Once near Bethesda Fountain they ran into a group of Asian men in kimonos practicing some martial art. Patty remembers everyone watching and laughing quietly in amazement. Later they walked through the Ramble and heard noises, but no one bothered them. *The Ramble*? The Ramble wasn't safe in broad daylight. What did they think they were doing?

The baby has got her foot caught in her own pant leg and is making a fussy, crying noise, a whimper that is the beginning of a louder complaint. "Goofball," Charlotte says. "Are you thinking about crying? Think again." Of all of them, the one who has changed the most is Charlotte. She is so stunned by the good luck of getting this baby that she is incredibly cheerful. She walks down the street with the bright-blue stroller, making up rhymes out loud. She is breezy and competent. She claims living with a baby is easy, something Patty has never heard anyone say before and knows to be untrue. Charlotte says babies tell you what they want, their needs are simple.

"Five of the boxes are for you," Charlotte says. Patty is a little behind on her packing, to put it mildly. It is pretty open between them that she is starting to get cold feet about going. Just lately it seems like much too much trouble to her to try to start all over in a new place. At her age. Why should this be asked of her? She doesn't offer this as any sort of argument. She believes in fresh starts, in second chances, in tremendous changes at any age, any stage—she works in a treatment center, doesn't she?

All the same, she thinks Charlotte is leaning on her too hard about the move, rushing her, bullying her, even. Let Charlotte pack all the cartons if she wants to get out of here so Goddamned fast. Patty doesn't say this. She says, "Maybe my stuff will just fly into the boxes, and the boxes will fly into the van."

"Sure," Charlotte says. "Don't budge and you'll find out."

Patty watches the baby, who is quietly chewing on a corner of her box, while Charlotte begins dinner preparations. Even now, Charlotte doesn't believe in meals that are too hasty and unceremonious. The kitchen begins to smell of garlic, butter, onions, cheese. Sometimes Patty still can't believe she eats like this every night.

When Jack came to dinner the first time, he made fun of their kitchen—the salt grinder, the hanging wreaths of peppers (hilarious props, to hear him tell it) but after that he was different around Patty, more eager, even a little chastened.

The baby has cornered the dog and is pulling at the fur on his neck. Freddie looks patient and miserable, but who knows what his breaking point is? He's a big dog, a collie-shepherd mix they found in the street. Patty pries Wyona off, and the baby shrieks in protest. She lets out a series of really loud squawks, and by the time Patty has distracted her with the Kermit doll Charlotte wants the salad washed.

"We won't get arugula like this upstate," Patty says.

"Of course we will. In our garden. Mark has it in his. He has radicchio, too." Mark is their one friend in the area.

"He loves his garden," Patty says. "That's all he talks about now. Except in winter. In winter he's into chimney maintenance."

"He needs to have that thing relined," Charlotte says. To Charlotte all of this is cozy and lively.

"And he's obsessed about landfills. Mr. Garbage. A dinner with him feels like it's about two days long."

"Don't go next time, then."

"You'll get like that soon. You'll be like him."

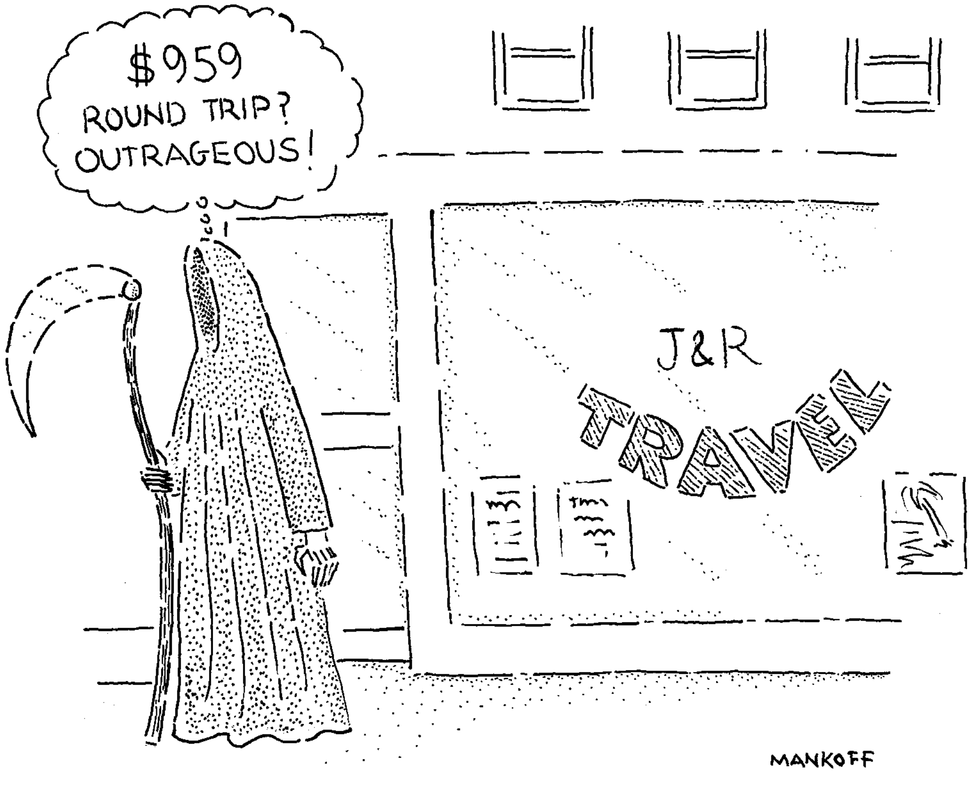
Patty knows that she is being spiteful and sour and that her reasons for this are unsound. Why is she doing it? Curdling what happiness they have, trying to spoil her own luck, which she must know by now is hard to come by. She is riled up anyway, full of hot indignation at whatever she thinks Charlotte is doing to them, to her.

Patty sees them in the future—meek, stout, spinsterish. On the porch of their farmhouse. Talking about their attic insulation. They will have forgotten what they knew of anything aberrant, expansive, or emotionally subterranean. They will have made themselves forget.

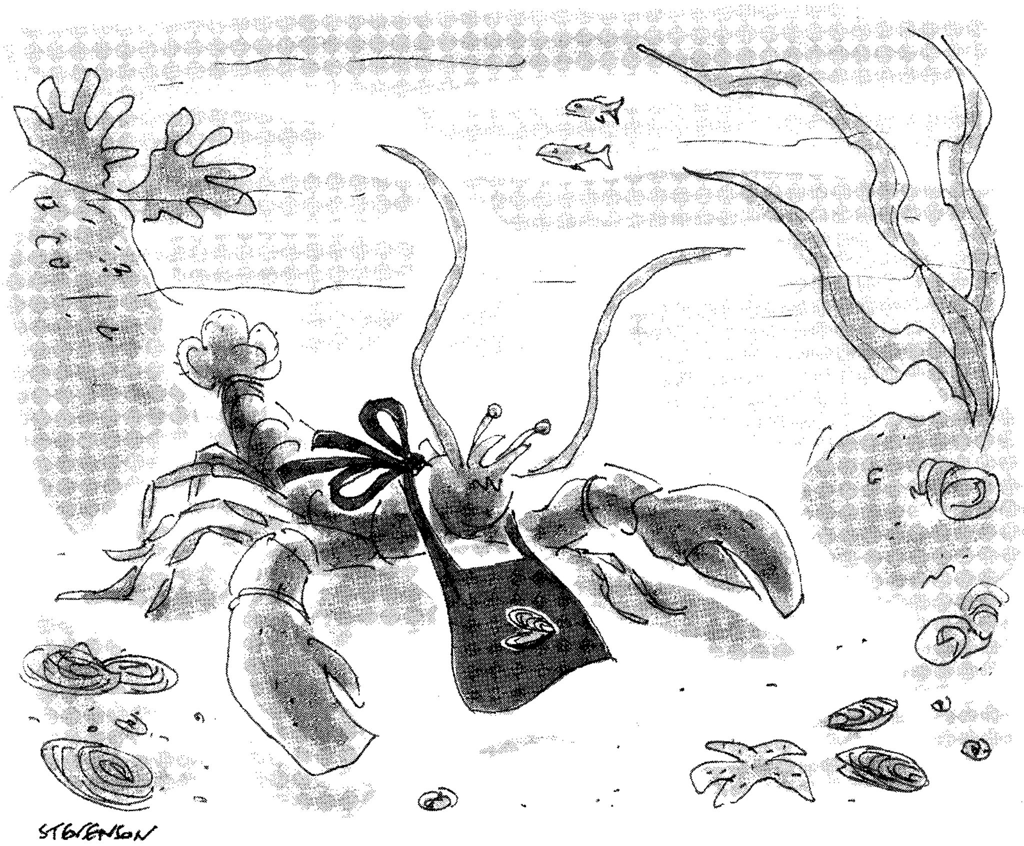
"You were always like that, actually," Patty says.

That starts them both off. Once they get going they won't stop. They dig up the worst evidence about each other that they can remember, the most enraging details. Why are they together, then? Patty thinks it is all a mistake. She feels hard and clear and slightly out of her mind.

In their new clarity they shout scathing advice to each other. Their voices frighten not Wyona, who is sleeping by now, and who sleeps through everything, but the dog. He thinks they are yelling at him. He runs to hide under the sofa, scrambling to fit himself under the frame. "It's O.K., Freddie," Patty says. "Good dog, good Fredster." Patty's voice, which Charlotte can hear, too, is cajoling, sweet; it makes all the squabbling between them seem fake and affected—a phony harshness. Charlotte comes over; together they offer the dog a piece of cheese. Freddie edges out and makes a fast lunge for it. Then he backs under the sofa again.



DEATH DECIDES NOT TO TAKE A HOLIDAY



After this Patty and Charlotte are somewhat embarrassed about fighting. They set the meal on the table as if some rude outside person had interrupted the proper urgency of eating. They sit down quietly; they watch the news.

On TV there are wounded soldiers in a hospital. Patty can't believe they watch this while they eat. At the end there is a spot feature on an English rock group's tour of the Soviet Union. The camera shows them blowing out one of their amplifiers, which makes Charlotte laugh. Charlotte was the drummer in a women's rock band for a few years. They toured as far as Oregon, they cut one record. Charlotte still has her old T-shirts with the group's name in crusty silver letters. She teaches Wyona percussion effects with spoons and cake pans; she has bought her a set of claves. There is nothing wrong with Charlotte.

When the baby wakes up cranky they offer her apple juice, but it takes a while to get her back to sleep. Charlotte, who has been doing most of the Wyona work all day, goes off to bed early. Patty still hasn't done any boxes.

She walks the dog, who is thrilled to be out. On the street he barks at a couple out jogging. People have been jogging for a while, but it still strikes Patty as something you would never do if you didn't live in this particular era. A whole generation of people are rigorously athletic through a kind of historical fate, Patty thinks.

You could say drugs were like that twenty years ago. People who wouldn't have been anywhere near them in another time used them freely as a matter of course, developed appetites, and kinds of slyness, they wouldn't have known they had.

Not Jack, though. Jack would've been into something no matter when he was born, something shady and sporty and hidden. Jack is more of an old tricky type, a perennial. At present he is trying to figure out how to harass Patty about her move and at the same time foster a mutual assumption that he is welcome to stay with them in the country anytime.

Jack is much better than he used to be. He used to be much less mild in his little jokey personal remarks; once he started he didn't stop. Patty has seen a woman throw a bottle at him in sheer anguish. But he has always been more careful with Patty than with other people.

Something else Patty doesn't forget is that Jack once stood by her all night when she was waiting for a girlfriend to show up from California and the girlfriend got mysteriously delayed for twenty-four hours. He made Patty play a very long game of Monopoly and they watched "Sunrise Semester" together on TV. He was good at making people do things, a skill Patty admired, this one time. And he could juggle—he had learned somewhere or taught himself. It was funnier than you would think to see him throwing oranges around. He looked so intent and hardworking and yet so light, so wacky. That night he juggled blueberries, a big mess.

So Patty owed him; she is an honorable person, or tries to be. She lent him money when he asked; she didn't mind. He borrowed ten dollars and gave it back the next week. Who minds that? Then he had trouble paying her back and he had to keep borrowing. His accumulated debt with her went up to a hundred—worth more then but not exactly a fortune. And he seemed truly embarrassed every time he asked, sorry that he had come to this. "It's fine," she would tell him. What she hated was seeing him so apologetic. Or did she?

Jack was working then in a record store—getting a salary that had always been enough before, so his habit must have grown by a few leaps. (Within a year he took off for Florida—to try to cut back, though Patty didn't put these two things together till later.) One day a man bought some albums with a MasterCard and forgot to take it when he left. It made Jack happy to have found a way to pay her back.

Everything wasn't on computers then. Stores made phone calls to check credit-card numbers, but Jack said that if you bought something under a certain amount nobody bothered. What did Patty need that would cost twenty dollars or less? She could pick it out herself; they would go shopping. Whatever she wanted.

Gloves, Patty said right away. It

EDEN

Yellow-oatmeal flowers of the windmill palms
like brains lashed to fans—
even they think of cool paradise,

not this sterile air-conditioned chill
or the Arizona hell in which they sway becomingly.
Every time I return to Phoenix I see these palms

as a child's height marks on a kitchen wall,
taller now than the yuccas they were planted with,
taller than the Texas sage trimmed

to a perfect gray-green globe with pointillist
lavender blooms, taller than I,
who stopped growing years ago and commenced instead

my slow, almost imperceptible slouch
to my parents' old age:
Father's painful bend—really a bending of a bend—

to pick up the paper at the end of the sidewalk;
Mother, just released from Good Samaritan,
curled sideways on a sofa watching the soaps,

an unwanted tear inching down
at the plight of some hapless Hilary or Tiffany.
How she'd rail against television as a waste of time!

Now, with one arthritis-mangled hand,
she aims the remote control at the set
and flicks it off in triumph, turning to me

as I turn to the trees framed in the Arcadia door.
Her smile of affection melts into the back of my head,
a throb that presses me forward,

hand pressed to glass. I feel the desert heat
and see the beautiful shudders of the palms in the yard
and wonder why I despised this place so,

why I moved from city to temperate city, anywhere
without palms and cactus trees.
I found no paradise, as my parents know,

but neither did they, with their eager sprinklers
and scrawny desert plants pumped up to artificial splendor,
and their lives sighing away, exhaling slowly,

the man and woman
who teach me now as they could not before
to prefer real hell to any imaginary paradise.

—David Woo

• •

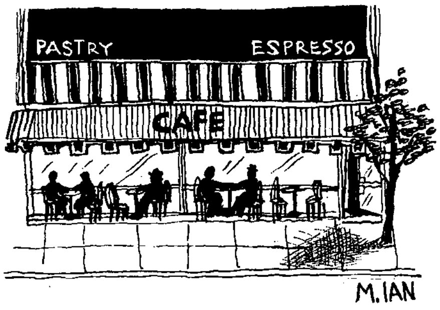
was winter, and she kept losing them. She was down to a ratty red wool pair with holes. Leather ones would be nice, lined leather. Wool or fur lining, she didn't care.

When they walked into the department store Patty felt normal. As normal as she felt most of the time in those days. She was used to doing things that surprised her; she was interested in what she would do. It so happened this wasn't the sort of adventure that especially thrilled her, but then, here she was.

It was a small department store, and the saleswoman didn't have a big range of gloves to show them. "Just something plain," Patty said. She had to settle on ones with funny brass fasteners, the plainest they had. "You sure you like them?" Jack said. "Get what you like."

The gloves were fourteen dollars. The saleswoman, who was young and unfriendly, took the card and picked up a phone near her cash register. Right away Jack caught Patty's eye. He tilted his head—was that a signal to go? The woman spoke over the phone in a chatty normal way, probably just tallying the amount with some bureau in the store. Patty started drifting away from the counter, looking at displays, and then she drifted back, not wanting to panic. "God," she called over to Jack, "they make you go through so much red tape now." Jack was an aisle away, but he came back to her then.

Patty browsed around the mittens, waiting. And then she saw Jack start running. Patty remembers the sudden sight of his back, his elbows moving up and down. The saleswoman, in her high heels, was after him—she was shouting, "Security guard! Stop that man!," as if she'd been trained to say it. Patty remembers being stunned that this was happening in a department store, with the stupid musical bells of elevators and the hum of shoppers around her. What she doesn't remember now is whether she saw the guard when he got Jack. She kept her distance, moving through the displays the way any customer would, strolling toward the door, and she remembers the rush of thankfulness when she was out on the street. But she must have seen him caught, because she didn't wait for him by the door or across the street, which she would've done otherwise.



But Patty knew right away it had been her fault. She saw she wasn't cut out for this sort of thing, had no business being there. All her calmness, her clever guessing, had been completely off the mark. And Jack paid for it.

But what could they do to him for fourteen dollars' worth of fraud? In fact, they did a lot to him. For one thing, he had racked up a few other purchases on the card. Even so. Perhaps it simply took two days to arraign him and no one could get him out before then; maybe he didn't call a lawyer. He spent two nights in the Tombs, the old jail on Centre Street.

Jack called her a few hours after he got out. "It was an unusual experience," he said. He meant that only half as a joke. "I met some fairly interesting people." That was all. He was much less surprised about all of it than she was, and he wasn't angry.

"If I hadn't made us stay," Patty said, "you could've gotten out of the store with no trouble. You wouldn't have gotten arrested if I had let us just leave."

"Patty," he said. "One thing about jail. Every single person has that story. It's full of people who wouldn't have been there at all if something else had been different. Believe me."

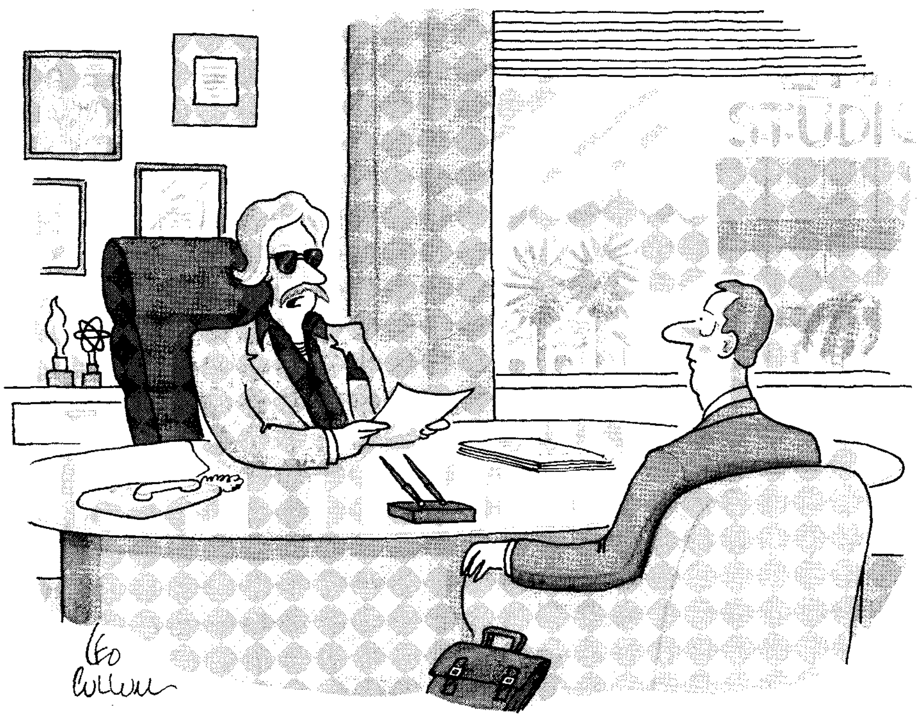
Patty felt childish then, with her little squeaky protestations. Jack was beyond her. He was way past her. And he was very nice to her under the circumstances—gallant, in his way. "Forget it," he said.

PATTY has talked about this story hardly at all; Charlotte knows only a watered-down version. It was a few years before it struck her how truly bumbling she had been—most twelve-year-olds would've been more savvy. So why had Jack wanted to bring her along? He might've bought her a present without asking. He might've done his shopping without her. But he was always bringing people along. He liked getting everyone on his bus; he was a junkie.

Charlotte has said that the story shows how mild and compliant Patty was then. But Patty knows that she was wildly confident, quite full of herself. Never, never did she think they were in any real peril. Why would they be? They thought people who worked in stores were the timid, foolish ones. The things she bothered to worry over then (some of them hair-raising, now that she thinks of them) turned out fine and had no consequences.

Patty can be thankful for that, and sometimes she is. All things considered, she has fared well. And lately, with Wyona, her life has taken a turn she could never have expected. When the baby tries to walk now, she grabs hold of Patty's leg and wants to use it as a crutch; if Patty tows her along, she grunts and pants in glee and concentration.

Patty thinks of a city populated by what Charlotte calls born-again families, people startled by late (but not too late) home lives. Who knew they were going to end up like this? Not Patty.



"It's a fine résumé, but the best I can offer you right now is a cameo in accounting."

• •

When Patty gets into bed, she looks at Charlotte twisted in the covers. It is a joke between them that they like each other best when they're sleeping, but Patty does have moments of great contentment at this time of night, the sense of floating in some pulsing bright element that is her own real life.

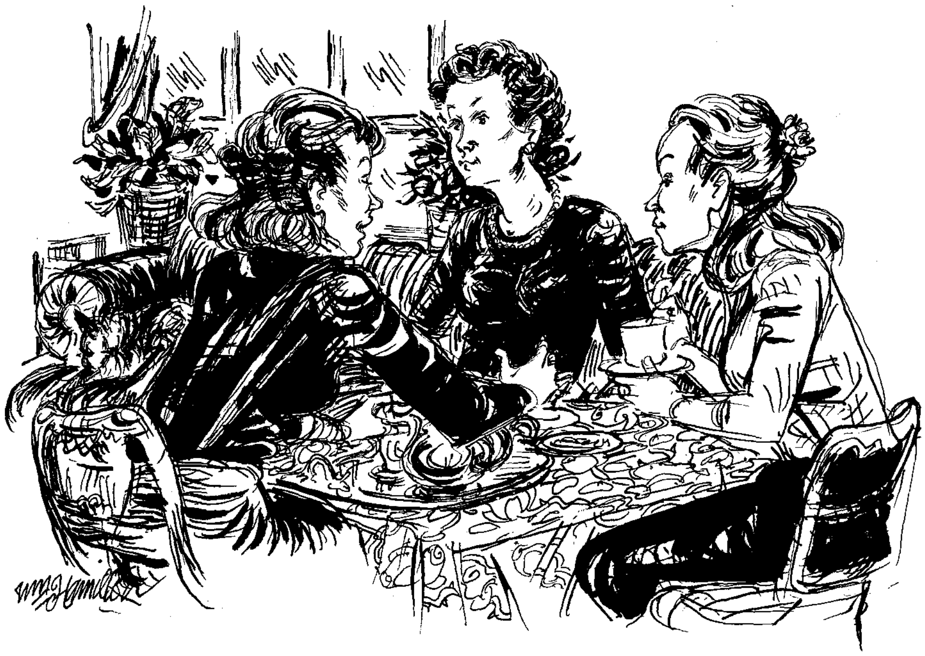
Patty falls asleep like this, but she wakes up when she hears Wyona crying from the living room. They generally try to stop her before she really gets going, since she's old enough to stand up and rock the crib, once she's in her yowling mode. Charlotte is still asleep, or pretending to be.

"Who's crying?" Patty says, when she goes in to her. "That's some other baby, that's not Wyona." The baby wails a little more, and then, when Patty starts the music box (it's a mobile that plays "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"), Wyona listens and pipes down.

Patty hasn't told Charlotte that she got this childcare tip from Jack, of all people. Charlotte would decide it was a corrupt device if she knew. As it is, she is thinking of buying a giant bear from Toys R Us that plays "Für Elise."

Jack has two children in Miami, two boys. They're eleven and thirteen. His wife doesn't want him to see them. When they were little, he took them with him sometimes to his dealer's house; it was a stop he had to make, and there was a yard for them to play in. Eileen, his wife, was working at the time. Nothing happened to them in the dealer's yard—the children remember a woman with a broken tooth who used to be very nice to them—but Eileen has not forgotten this and a number of other things. Eileen is still in Miami, or right outside it. Jack met her there. They lived in a tract house on a canal. To Jack, who is from Detroit, it was the wilderness. They had bougainvillea, hibiscus, star jasmine. There were fish in the canal—once a barracuda, a small one. It was interesting to see, Jack says. He liked the lizards, the pelicans, the herons. Even the dolphin show at the Aquarium, which his kids insisted on going to about forty times. But he wasn't so sorry to leave, and it's better for everyone if he doesn't go back.

THE next day at work there's a farewell party for Patty at the end of the afternoon. Carmen and Dennis, who runs the switchboard, have made a sign that says "ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK," and Lorene, the clerk super-



"That's the same old thirty pounds that's been coming and going for as long as I've known her."

• •

visor, has brought in her famous carrot cake. Patty is excited by all the attention, by the niceness of people. What a great office she works in. Why is she leaving it? Gail, one of the social workers, says she envies Patty. Gail had her purse stolen last week, out of this very office, and she says she's tired of spending so much of her life being irritated. "I yell at my husband, I yell at salespeople. I get in line for anything and I'm ready to hit someone. At least I don't come in and yell at the clients." Yelling at the Center's clients is a definite no-no, as is a sarcastic tone or any humor at their expense; plain scolding is O.K. It was probably one of them who stole her purse, although it could've been the cleaning lady. Gail is a sweet-faced, high-voiced woman, and if she really is getting shrewish it's a waste (among the other wastes around them).

Carmen says everything bad that people say about New York is true, but she wants to know where else can you run around all night and there's a dozen different clubs that are worth hanging out in. All right, say only ten. Carmen is in her twenties, going strong.

Gail says, "In the country you won't have to step over garbage in the street." This reminds them all of Eddie MacIntyre, a client who died of AIDS. He liked to sweep the sidewalk in front of the Center; he was outraged by New York sanitation. The staff once got him a T-shirt that said "NEXT TO GODLINESS." He was Gail's client; no wonder she says she wants to hide in Patty's luggage when she leaves.

Someone is passing around paper cups of 7UP (no alcohol here). There's a wrapped present the size of a Great Dane—probably a joke, something smaller inside—but Patty is stalling opening it. She'd like to know where Jack is, for instance.

The Center's director, Big Bad Brad, is here. Actually, he's not a bad guy for a psychiatrist. At present he is ignoring the fact that Marcus and Ernestine have joined the festivities. They are clients in the residential program, and they tend to walk the halls and go where they don't belong. Into these offices, for example. Marcus is handsome and gabby, and Ernestine is half crippled and scared, and hops around with a cane, and neither of them can stand still.

"You got the right idea," Marcus says to Patty. "Leave now before it all falls down. I think I feel some of that debris right now."

"How she going to get along without us?" Ernestine says. She looks tickled with herself for having made a joke.

Someone has given Patty a foil-paper tiara to wear, as if it were New Year's. She feels giddy, and sentimental, and horrible about leaving. She could stay. It's not too late to ask for her resignation back. It would be embarrassing, but no one would mind; they're used to oddness here.

But Patty knows why she's going. All along, the whole thing has been her idea as much as Charlotte's. She wants to be in the mountains; she wants, among other things, to be able to see farther than she has. She is sorry sometimes (when she's in the mood to be sorry) that she used up so many years in smallness, in narrow satisfactions and narrow complaints.

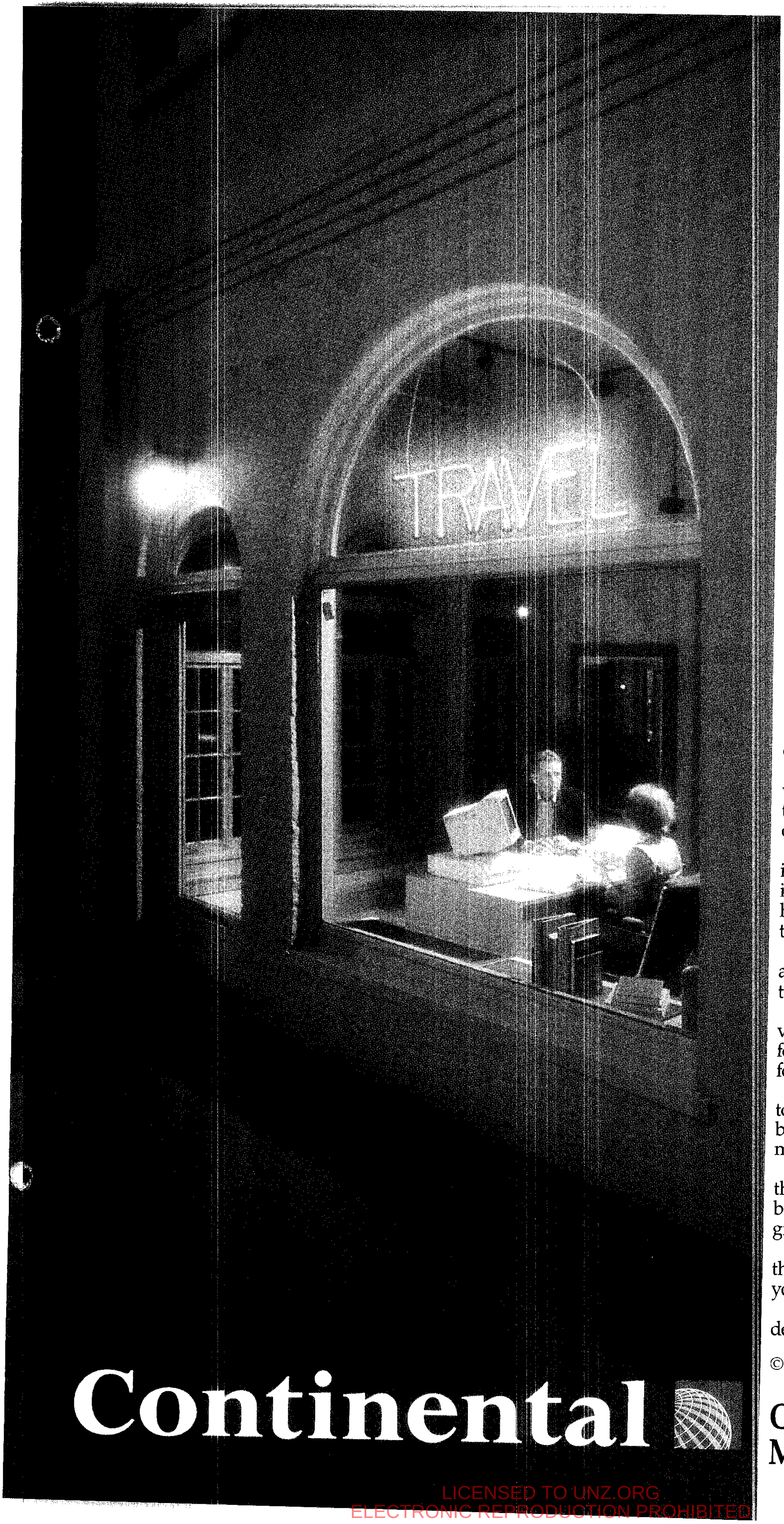
The lake they will be living near has mists on it in the morning. From above, when they go hiking, the lake looks like an illusion. There it is; no, it isn't—they keep losing it and sighting it. A patch of light along the ground. The first time Charlotte walked along the bank, holding Wyona, Patty saw them from a hundred feet away as if they were made out of dust motes and air, pure figures.

Now Dennis is busy taking pictures of everyone. Patty and Lorene and Gail all pose with their fingers behind one another's heads for horns. And Jack is finally here. "Hey," he says. "It's the party of the season. Someone's going to OD on the flavored seltzer any minute."

"Eat your potato chips and be good," Patty says.

Jack is dapper today—he's been uptown visiting the other Center, and he's wearing a sports jacket that makes him look like a rock promoter. Even skinny and old he looks a hell of a lot better than he used to. He doesn't smoke now—he gave that up when he found out he was so good at renouncing. He takes megavitamins and he jogs twenty miles a week. (Some people don't know when to stop, Patty tells him.)

Patty worries that he's too thin, but he got tested for AIDS again last month and he was fine. Everyone in the office is always warning Carmen about using condoms, but Patty knows she doesn't listen—she's too young, too vain, too something to want to think about consequences. Patty thinks about them all



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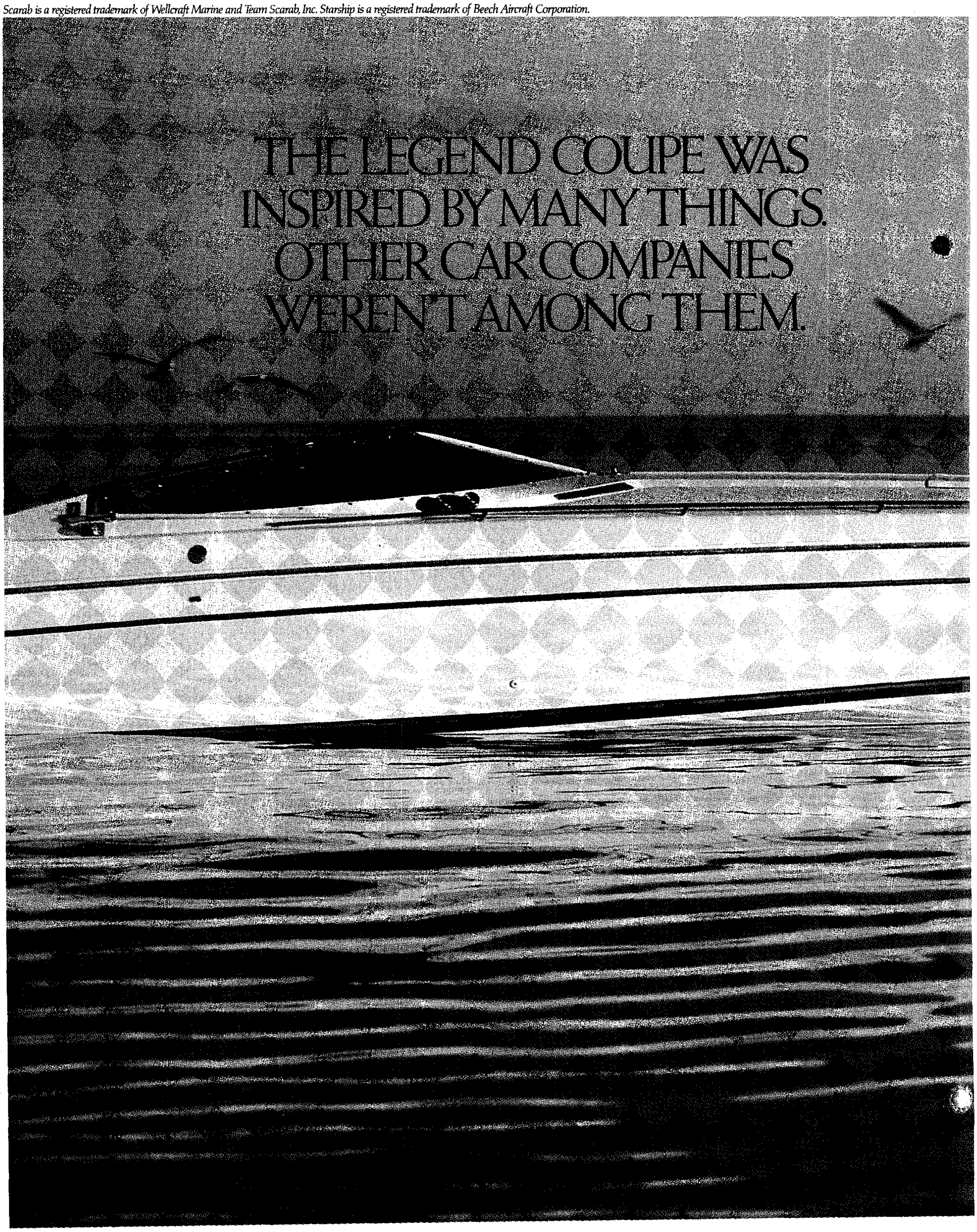
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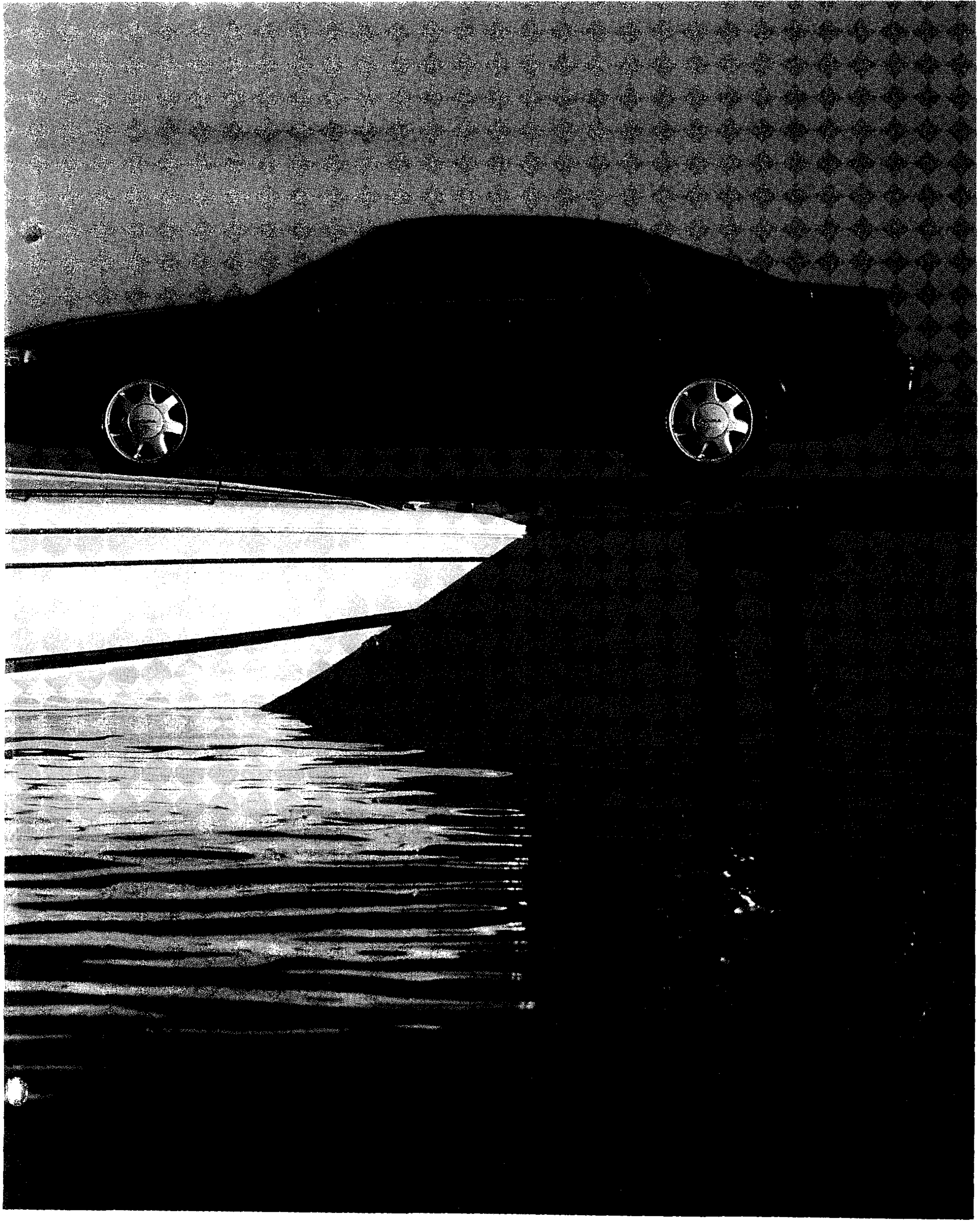

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the time now. Some days she can hardly move for worrying about what she's doing, and about what it will do to Wyona. Your heart gets heavier: she once said that to Jack.

"Nice tiara," Jack says. "Going somewhere?"

"She's going to the woods," Marcus says. "To the Garden of Eden."

"With others of her kind," Jack says.

Nobody asks what he means by this. Some of them know about Charlotte and some don't. Is that what he means?

"Going off with the moles and the raccoons," Jack says. "Isn't she?"

"She's no mole," Ernestine says.

"Sure she is," Jack says. He chuckles as if this really were funny.

Jack should be careful, Patty thinks. They like her here; they only sort of like him. They don't know what to make of him. Who does?

Brad wants to know when the hell Patty's going to open her present. Does she think they just got it for decoration, or what? Patty starts ripping through the wrapping paper—it's got tissue under it, and when she unwinds it all she sees they've bought her a rocking chair. It's a nice one, plain, with a walnut finish. "For your retirement," Jack says, which is just what she's saying to herself—how old do these people think she is? Who picked this? But, actually, she's always liked rocking chairs, and it'll be nice for when she's holding Wyona. She goes around kissing everybody to thank them. "Wear it well," Gail says.

"You like the red cushion? You could get blue instead," Dennis says.

"I think it's perfect," Jack says. "Your speed."

"Want a little cake, Jack?" Lorene says. "Keep your mouth full."

Brad says maybe they should move the whole Center to the country. "I wish," he says. He was on TV a month ago talking about how it's going to be when the crack babies grow up. He sounded grave and tired—a doctor giving bad news. They're still teasing him here about his video fame. The show was called "What If New York Can't Be Saved?"—a title the whole staff hated. "Too whiny," Lorene said. "Tears in your beer."

Patty is trying out her rocking chair. "God, it's so soothing," she says. "I love it."

"This is what people like to do all the time in the country," Jack says. "All the people who can't move fast enough for New York."

Patty doesn't think she's a failure, but she thinks of how she might really be seen that way. She's stayed just an office worker; she's never pushed herself, as her mother says. Pushed where? Patty always says. But now she sometimes thinks if she had taken a different path they would have more money for Wyona.

"Lake Gutless, that's where you're moving," Jack says.

"Chill out, Jack," Gail says.

"The real people are staying," Jack says. "You're not going anywhere, right, Gail?"

"Not at the moment."

"They don't even have subways up there, that's how uncivilized they are. No Donald Trump. It's a desert. You're not thinking of buying the lot next to her, are you?"

Gail is laughing a little. He has her laughing.

"I didn't think so," Jack says. "You know how I can tell? By your breasts. No one has breasts in Albany. There's no sexual activity of any kind there. Not that Patty has normal sex anyway. She'll be O.K. in her little shack in the backwoods."

"That's enough," Gail says.

Jack gives one of his slow smiles and he holds up his hands. Then he puts his arm around Patty. "She loves me," he says to Gail.

Patty says, "Why are you being such an incredible pain today?"

"Appreciate me," Jack says. "Soon you'll be off with the rabbits and the moles."

"She's not a mole," Ernestine says.

"Sure she is," Jack says.

Ernestine shakes her head.

"What do you know about it?" Jack says. "You don't even know how to spell 'mole,' do you? Spell it for me. I'd like to hear you."

Gallery
GALLERY

The room is quiet, and Brad is looking at Jack with his famous evil eye. Jack is giving him a return stare. "Relax, Big B.," he says. "You look like a raccoon just goosed you." Jack is going to get himself fired, Patty thinks. If not now, then later. What did she get him this job for, then?

Ernestine is busy walking around the room in a zigzag; she is skittering like a cockroach. She probably does know how to spell; she just doesn't know how to talk, most of the time.

Jack still has his arm around Patty. What are they doing stuck together like this? Patty thinks everyone in the room must be asking that question. What's the longest she's gone without seeing Jack? Oh, years, and they could go that long again. Easy. Sometimes he just looks like some bald stranger.

Ernestine is stomping against the floor with her cane. She has never done this before, and Patty can't tell if it's nervous or menacing. "I guess you're applauding me," Jack says. Marcus is hovering around.

Meanwhile Jack is pinching Patty's waist. "Too many chocolate doughnuts," he says—about a food she hasn't eaten in fifteen years. And then Jack does something Patty doesn't expect. He goes over to the carrot cake and cuts a piece. "Hey, Ernestine," he says. "I heard there's drugs hidden in this. Better grab a piece fast before it all goes." Ernestine looks wary, but she sits down and eats a piece when he gives it to her. Jack picks up Ernestine's cane. "You got your weapon here," he says. "So I better watch out." He twirls it around, he swings it in big circles like a dancer in a chorus number. He throws it behind his back and tries to catch it from between his knees, but he drops it. He looks merry and clumsy, springier than you would think. Ernestine is laughing with her hand over her mouth.

See that? Patty wants to say to the room. Look at that. She is jealous in advance of everything that will go on without her. Look at Jack leaping around. Patty wants to ask him what vitamins he takes. She isn't even packed yet. How does anyone move? All the same, she'll be out of here soon, ready or not.

—JOAN SILBER

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

HEART OF THE DELTA

TO understand just why crop dusting is necessary to agriculture in the Mississippi River Delta, it helps to have planted a bean there. On July 4, 1989, I planted a single scarlet-runner-bean seed at the edge of a farm road outside Clarksdale, Mississippi. Seventeen days later, without my ever watering or fertilizing that seed, it had produced a bright-green vine eight feet nine inches long. Then, on the twentieth day, tragedy struck: bugs discovered my vine. The insects (they were aphids, I later learned) were tiny, the size of pencil dots on a sheet of paper, and there were thousands of them. By the evening of that day, July 24th, the vine was so covered with little bugs that it had become a pulsing, gray-white strand running along the ground. Two days after that—only three weeks after I planted my seed—the vine was dead: a brown, wizened strand that no longer attracted any bugs. My vine, as impressive as its sweet youth had been, had died before producing a single bean.

Were it not for crop dusting, the story of agriculture in the Delta would mirror the sad, speedy history of my bean. There is so much farmland there, and so much of it is swampy or (in the case of the rice fields) totally submerged, that the only way to tend it is from the air. If agricultural aviation should suddenly disappear from the Delta, here's what would happen: Most of the United States rice crop would be destroyed by insects and fungi. Forty per cent of our national cotton harvest would be ruined by bollworm and boll weevil. Roughly a quarter of our national soybean yield would never make it to the silo. The cotton gins would stop, the area's grain elevators would empty, and the farmers of the Delta would have almost no new produce to sell. Rice would have to be imported, the price of domestic cotton would skyrocket, and the spiralling cost of soybeans (used in everything from Hamburger Helper to automobile tires and pharmaceuticals) would make the price of being an everyday American rise appreciably.

The Mississippi River Delta is a roughly triangular floodplain that stretches away—east and west—from each bank of the mighty brown river itself. Though the state of Mississippi has claimed the Delta as its own, the region's topographic and agricultural character actually extends to Cairo, Illinois, where the Ohio River joins the Mississippi. From there, the Delta traces a constantly broadening path south, always keeping the river roughly at its center. Through the bootheel of Missouri, across western Tennessee, past Memphis and into the Cotton Belt, the Delta encompasses much of the western half of the state of Mississippi, the eastern half of Arkansas, and most of Louisiana as it makes its cross-bayou splay for the Gulf of Mexico.

Through the millennia, as the Mississippi has moved south, it has also etched a switchback east-west course over hundreds of miles—an apparently random path that has widened its floodplain considerably and has left behind a layer of fertile topsoil sediment, which, in some places, is more than forty feet thick. At its widest, the Delta spans more than five hundred ballroom-floor-flat miles (its topographic influences can be seen as far west as Houston), and over its entire length it contains nearly three hundred thousand square miles of Delta-grade silt, a loosely packed dirt as rich as any potting soil you could buy at the local garden nursery.

If you take the time to drive across the Delta in winter, its sky and earth and seemingly abandoned shotgun shacks all assume the same shade of gray. It's a world of three-hundred-and-sixty-degree horizon—a damp, windy, desolate place, where daytime temperatures hover just above freezing, and where dormant fields stretch away forever, snagged only occasionally by a brake of cypress trees, a planter's shack, or a boxy, whitewashed, single-story Baptist church. In the cold months, wintering red-tailed hawks rest on top of telephone poles and fence posts, and stringy trails of cotton blow across the farm roads. Road-killed armadillos and hounds lie along the highways like mile markers. And, all season long, there are vast flocks of ducks and geese overhead, moving south and, later, back north along the Mississippi River flyway. The birds often stop to rest, and they can be seen by the million in the flooded river bottoms, gorging themselves in the drained rice fields. They are a squawking, honking, cacophonous lot, and their noise is the soundtrack of Delta winters.

Then comes the explosion of spring and summer: the verdant pastels of young rice fields, the deep green of cotton plants, the thick growths of soybeans. And above it all lies the flat and pale-blue sky, where monstrous thunderheads form every afternoon at about three-thirty. During the hot months, weeds sprout in every sidewalk crack, and the air is thick with the smell of flowers and drying mud and dirt-road dust. The sun crushes down at midday, washing the color from everything and adding its own shimmery silver patina. And then there's the animal life: the deer hiding in the swamp brakes; the snakes crossing the two-lanes like dark, slippery lengths of rope; the buzzards riding afternoon thermals in the sky; and, of course, the flying insects, which swarm there in infuriating, mind-numbing density. You drive through the Mississippi River

Delta during summer, and, day or night, insects clatter constantly against your car's windshield.

ONE afternoon in mid-July, the usual thunderstorm crouches on the horizon just southwest of West Helena, Arkansas, and in the offices of Planter's Ag, one of the local crop-dusting outfits, Jim Lawhon and Gus Rogers are worrying. Lawhon, a tall, beefy man of forty-five, with a handsome pug face and with legs that make him appear to have grown up on horseback, paces up and back in the planked, three-room shack that Planter's Ag calls home. "Looks like rain again," he says. "Rain. Rain. Every day, rain. How the *hell* do I get caught up when it keeps raining?"

He strolls to his desk, a gray pressed-steel affair in a corner. On one wall above the desk is a Presidential portrait of Ronald Reagan; on the other is a cheesecake calendar (nearly clothed women posed on commuter-aircraft noses). It's a little after three o'clock, and Lawhon has been flying non-stop since sunup, his most recent chore having been to sift white granulated fertilizer onto flooded rice fields around West Helena. "It's amazing I'm still in business," Lawhon says, sitting down in his desk chair. "God-*damned* amazing." He rubs his face with a broad, suntanned hand.

Lawhon decides to find some lunch, and gets up and walks into the back room, which functions as a kitchen. In a minute, he returns, with a Coke Classic and a Winston cigarette. "Nothing to eat in this whole place," he says. "God, I'll tell you, between the E.P.A., the F.A.A., OSHA, my overhead, and this *God-damned* weather, I should be out of business or dead. These fields have to be sprayed today, *right now*, or the farmers' yields will fall off. And it's rained every afternoon now for twenty-two days, and I can't fly in all this rain." He shakes his head. "This farming-from-the-air stuff, shit. If I could make this kind of money managing a shoe store, I'd do it in a heartbeat."

He paces to the shack's west-facing window and inspects his airplane, a single-engine, red-white-and-blue, pilot-only model, whose wings are placed low along its fuselage. The plane, a Turbo-thrush, has the aggressive, I'll-do-this-myself look of Second World War fighter aircraft as it sits on the black asphalt strip of the Planter's Ag runway, just beyond the window. Now that the day's rice-fertilizing orders have been filled, it's on to the next job, which is to apply insecticide to a cotton field two miles away.

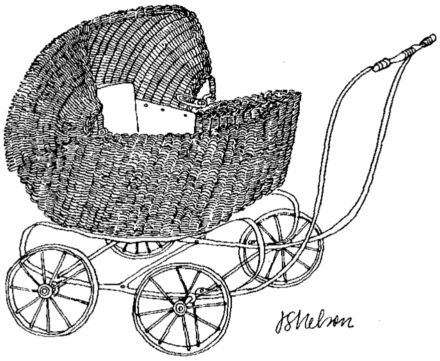
Lawhon walks to the front of the shack, which faces north. He stares through the screen door for a moment, shaking his head at the thunderclouds on the horizon.

Gus Rogers, a roostery man of fifty-four who's always wearing a billed cap, is Lawhon's partner and the manager of Planter's Ag. Rogers is seated at the other desk in the shack, and, as is almost always the case, he has a telephone cradled on his left shoulder; he's taking a farmer's order, writing it down on a carboned ticket. Still, he looks up from his order-taking and glances at Lawhon. "Aw, Jimmy," he says. "It's just a little *rain*, man. And anyway"—he pauses for a drag on his cigarette—"you couldn't quit. You'd miss the flying."

THE rains have now descended on Planter's Ag from the southwest, and Jim Lawhon is airborne, somewhere inside the storm. The sky is charcoal gray, and is growing darker and more ominous by the minute. Thunder booms, and the rain falls horizontally and in sheets. Leafy branches—torn from trees somewhere upwind—tumble along the road that the shack fronts on. Inside the Planter's Ag office, Gus Rogers, at his desk, listens to the spitting hiss of the two-way radio. Jim Lawhon's signal spills weakly through the radio's squeals. "It's storming on our cotton," Lawhon says. "Can't get home, neither. I'm gonna look for another place to set down, or maybe I'll dodge around till this stuff passes through."

Rogers lifts the office microphone and depresses the send key on the mike's stand. "O.K., Jimmy," he says.

"Flying north by east," Lawhon says. "I'll see how the airport looks. Maybe I can land there. If not, come looking."



The radio screeches and squalls again. Then it is silent. Rain beats against the shack's walls and windows. Wind whips at its corners. I ask Rogers why he doesn't radio the storm's movements to Lawhon.

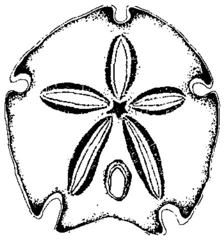
"He knows where the storm is," Rogers says. "He's in it. And, anyway, Jimmy's got better things to do right now than listen to me."

In twenty minutes the storm has passed through. In another five minutes, the sky overhead is pale blue again; the clouds have moved to the northwest, their hulking gray shapes dragging tentacles of rain toward the horizon. A minute later, Lawhon's plane can be seen moving out of the northwest—a low-winged silhouette coming in just above a line of trees. At half a mile out, the humming sound of the plane's turbine engine becomes audible. Thirty seconds later, Lawhon is on the ground at the runway's far end, the plane tipping and bucking on the asphalt.

The Turbo-thrush hurtles up the runway, going far too fast. It hops and teeters on its landing-gear struts; its tires squeal against the asphalt surface. Lawhon feathers the propeller, and the plane speeds toward the shack, bouncing and pitching from side to side. Finally, at fifty yards, it begins to brake, yet it's still going too fast, seemingly out of control. At the last possible moment, Lawhon cranks down the wing flaps and kicks the rudder to the left. The aircraft turns a hundred and eighty degrees in a spin that stops it dead. Lawhon shuts off the engine, and its turbine whine dies out across the nearby cotton fields. He removes his white crash helmet and hangs it on the rudder stick. He shakes his head vigorously and rubs his face with his right hand.

After a moment, he lifts the cockpit door and gets out—stepping heavily onto the wing, then down to the ground. He is smiling broadly. "God, God. Thank you, *God*," he says. He throws his hands into the air, fluttering them theatrically; he keeps walking toward the shack. "I couldn't hardly fly that thing with the hopper full of pesticide," he continues. "I thought for *God-damned sure* I was going to hit the house. God knows, I couldn't just open the gate and dump that poison. I'd be buying dead crops from now till Christmas.”

I’m standing on the porch watching Lawhon walk toward the shack; he passes the porch steps, moving toward the bed of his white Chevrolet pickup truck. “Did you *see* that?” he says. “Did you notice? That plane, it’s not made to land with four thousand pounds sitting in the hopper. Man, it was *slug*-gish. That plane—*God love it*—it was slooow!” He opens the lid of a cooler in the bed of his truck. It’s empty. He looks over to me. “Hey,” he says. “You got any beer in that jeep of yours?”



It happens that on my way to Planter’s Ag (and hoping for this exact question) I stopped to buy a twelve-pack of Budweiser and a six-pack of 7UP at a convenience store.

I walk out to my jeep (which is actually an aging Toyota Land Cruiser), swing open the back doors, and grab two cans of Bud from my cooler. I walk over to Lawhon’s truck and hand him one.

“Sir,” Lawhon says, “you are obviously a man of fine breeding.” He drains the can in a single, lengthy pull, then turns his gaze back to me. “Got another?” he says.

I fetch him another. He pops it and drinks this one more slowly.

“With this rain we can’t spray anymore today,” he says. “I only hope that liquid fertilizer I sprayed on those beans first thing this morning dried before the rain hit. If it didn’t, the chemicals in that fertilizer will mix with the rainwater and burn the plants’ leaves. Boy, that’ll be more hell to pay.” Lawhon leans against his truck and examines the sky. “We’re done for today,” he says. “What you say we jump in my truck, get some beer, and I’ll show you around *be-yew-ti-ful* West Helena?”

“LIKE every other complicated thing in life, agricultural aviation seems easy on the surface,” Lawhon says, steering his truck along a deserted Arkansas two-lane. “I mean, you just fly your plane a foot or two above some crops at a hundred-some miles per hour, and you distribute your load by pushing forward on a lever. And, hey”—he tosses up a hand—“that’s it.”

The truck rolls on, windows down, tires humming on the pavement. We pass a crawfish/catfish farm on the right, a stand of swamp-tupelo trees on the left; the sky is pale blue, the air is thick with humidity. “It really does seem easy,” Lawhon goes on. “I mean, you just carry liquid insecticide or granular fertilizer in the hopper of your aircraft, and at the right time you push this little cockpit lever forward, and that opens a gate on the hopper’s bottom. Air-pressure differentials and gravity pull your load through that opened gate, and it’s distributed onto the fields through the spreader. To quit, you just pull that lever back, and the hopper gate shuts. There’s a little math to it—you have to figure distribution amounts of the materials you’re spraying—but it’s relatively simple, especially if you have a pocket calculator handy.”

He pauses to light a Winston, then scans the fields on both sides of the highway. “But ag aviation is also the toughest job there is,” he says. “There’s all this stuff ag pilots have to be watching for. Like whether your aircraft is flying right, and whether *you’re flying* it right. And there’s always trees. I’ve hit some in my time. And high-tension wires. Always wires. And silos and barns. And then there’s other aircraft, too. A few years back, two boys north of here got killed when they collided in midair. They were working fields on different sides of a strip of trees. Both of ’em came over those trees at the same time and *bammo!*” He bangs on the steering wheel with the butt of his right hand. “They hit head on. Yep, there’s always something to be watching for, to be careful of.”

Lawhon looks out over the farmland some more; he is given to regular breaks in his monologue, moments when—like all agricultural people—he is no doubt remarking silently on crop conditions in different fields. “As an ag pilot, you’ve always got to be mindful of the toxicity of what you’re laying out,” he says. “Whether you’re applying your load evenly, making even swaths. Because if you aren’t, you won’t be in business long. If you spray too heavily, or if the wind blows some of what you’re spraying onto Farmer Brown’s crops, where it doesn’t belong, there’s a state examiner who comes out and verifies Farmer Brown’s claim. And, man, if you screwed up you just bought some useless plants. Most ag aircraft have this little button inside the cockpit. When you mash it, it puts out a string of smoke, so that you can gauge the wind and figure the drift. And the edges of some of the fields around here are flagged with white posts or white pennants, or such. We pilots use those flags to know where our last swath went in. You’ve got to be extremely careful with chemicals these days.

“That stuff sitting in my hopper, it’s called methyl parathion,” he continues, “and it’s mixed together with some other stuff. And it’s bad. If you get sloppy and lay a little of that stuff onto a creek or a catfish farmer’s pond, it kills the fish. All of ’em. That stuff’s so noxious that if some gets sprayed on your car it’ll eat the paint right off. Or if, for some stupid reason, somebody’s out sunbathing in a cotton field and gets misted, that stuff will burn on their skin like a bicycle trip to the Devil. You got to shower—and *really* scrub with soap—to get it off.”

The truck is approaching the edge of West Helena, and the warehouselike corrugated-steel rectangles of some cotton gins come into view. “If I’d have wrecked my aircraft this afternoon?” Lawhon says. “With all that poison in it? That poison would have run out into the ground, and nothing—nothing at all—would grow within twenty yards of there for years. I mean, you get a drop of that undiluted methyl parathion into an open cut on your hand, and, man, you die. You get no appeals. You get no lucky breaks. Your story is over.”

Lawhon turns onto a larger road, and begins talking about how he got into agricultural aviation. “When I was eighteen, I wanted to learn to fly,” he says. “I’d done pretty well in school, so I sold my water-ski boat for three hundred and fifty dollars and used that money for tuition at Memphis State. I was studying a little of everything, but I was especially interested in engineering, because I wanted to fly for the military. Well, I did well at college. I got some A’s. But when the next year came around I didn’t have another ski boat to sell, so I dropped out and joined the Marines. This was in 1966. And in the Marines in 1966, even if the recruiter said you could become eligible to be an aviator you were still an enlisted man. You got placed in the infantry, and you ended up in Vietnam.”

Without substantial prodding, this is all Jim Lawhon will say about his time in Vietnam. He does not say that after two years he rose to become a Marine platoon commander. He does not say that he was severely wounded at Camlo by mortar fire, and was hospitalized for eighteen months. Instead, he cuts right to his return to West Helena, where he matriculated at the local ag-flying school, which was then housed at West Helena's local airfield.

Lawhon has been flying commercially since 1973, and that makes him one of the longer-lived ag pilots going. Though actuarial estimates on the longevity of agricultural pilots vary, ag flying tends to be a young man's profession. When I ask Lawhon about this, he says, "Yes, yes, that's true. But after you've wrecked a few planes you get smart. If you're lucky enough to live through your first few crashes, then your odds of staying alive rise significantly."

I ask him about his plane wrecks.

"You want to hear stories about wrecking aircraft?" Lawhon says, stopping the truck at a Kwik-Stop supermarket at the edge of West Helena. "You're gonna *love* the boys at the airfield."

A Short History of Agricultural Aviation, Part 1: If you were an American aviator returning from the First World War, and you wanted to fly for a living, your prospects for eating regularly were pretty grim. The Army Air Service was releasing most of its aviators, and there were precious few commercial outlets for civilian pilots. If you had a little money (or a soul to sell), you could possibly obtain one of the ragged training biplanes that the government was unloading and become a barnstormer, but the demand for such entertainers was lean. If you didn't have any money, you simply went back to the farm or the neighborhood and tried to wangle getting re-upped in the Air Service.

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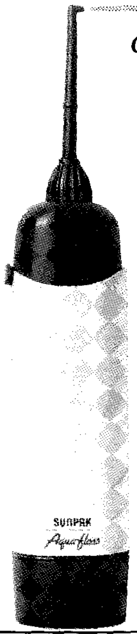

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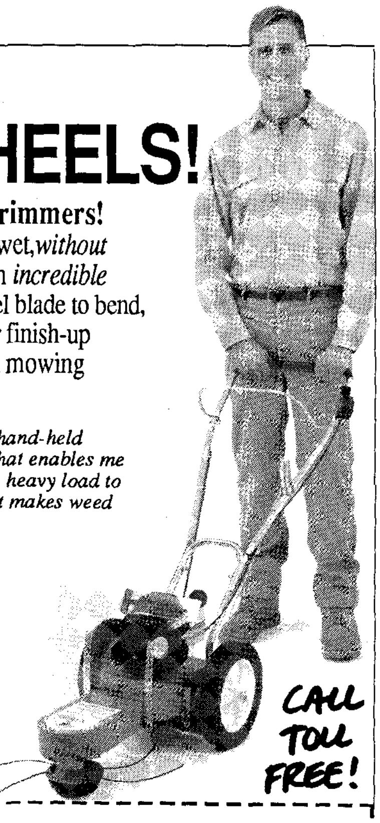

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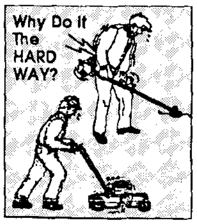

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the cutting edge of aviation, and for a First World War pilot—a guy used to dogfights and strafing runs—that made dirt farming or bond-selling look pretty dull.

Meanwhile, electric lights were spreading their friendly glow to even the farthest-flung parts of America, and the upstart fad of telephoning (instead of walking up the street to talk) had seized the national consciousness. Both these technological wonders required wires for their transmission, and stringing wires required poles. Poles were made from trees, and some of the best trees for making poles were northern catalpas—fast-growing hardwoods from the Eastern forests which were prized for their straight trunks. But northern catalpas had recently been laid siege to by the larvae of the catalpa sphinx moth—an inchworm that could infest a catalpa tree and sometimes kill it in a matter of weeks.

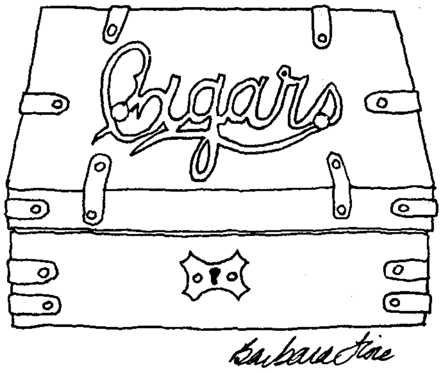
One day in 1921, at the Air Service's McCook Field, near Dayton, Ohio, C. R. Neillie, a state entomologist, stopped by with a question: Was there any way an airplane could apply insecticide to the catalpa trees? If you could drop insecticide from the air, Neillie said, you would be working with gravity instead of against it, and the trees would have a much better chance of being fully covered. The authorities at McCook were interested in the challenge, and put one of their most resourceful engineers, a Frenchman named Étienne Darmoy, on the job. Darmoy fashioned a metal hopper, which was then bolted to the left side of an old biplane, a Curtiss Jenny, and filled with lead arsenate, the only hundred-per-cent-lethal insecticide of the time.

On the afternoon of August 31, 1921, Lieutenant John Macready took the Jenny up and flew low over a catalpa grove near Troy, Ohio. Darmoy sat in the aircraft's passenger seat, distributing the lead arsenate by opening and closing the sliding gate that separated the hopper's cargo area from its spreader. The plane flew swaths back and forth above the grove for fifty-four seconds. When the flight was over, Macready and Darmoy landed in a nearby field and were greeted by three breathless state agriculturalists. The trees were perfectly covered, the scientists said. There was an evenly sifted layer of lead arsenate over the entire catalpa grove. The crop, they said, had been dusted.

THE sun is setting gold and warm across the flat Arkansas cropland, and at Thompson-Robbins Airfield, in West Helena, eight men have gathered around the bed of Jim Lawhon's pickup. It's sometime after seven o'clock, and everyone is telling plane-wreck stories. Besides Lawhon, the group includes four crop-duster pilots, their mechanic (a former crop duster), their gas-and-parts supplier (also a former crop duster), and a seventeen-year-old worshipper. All of them except the seventeen-year-old are licensed to fly airplanes (and the seventeen-year-old will have his license in less than a week). All of them—the seventeen-year-old again excluded—are drinking beer. All are dressed similarly: bluejeans, short-sleeved madras shirts, sunglasses. Most are in their late thirties or early forties. A few are going bald, and a few are wearing caps; most are smoking cigarettes.

Lawhon's pickup sits just outside the opened sliding door of the airfield's largest hangar. The sunlight falls through the doorway, leaving a dusty rhomboid footprint on the oil-blackened concrete of the hangar floor. In the past ninety minutes, the group around the truck has systematically drained the cases of beer that Lawhon bought at the Kwik-Stop. One by one, the empty cans are tossed into the bed of the truck with a clank. The white-enamelled steel of the truck bed, once fully visible, has become obscured by a stratum of empty Budweisers.

The men around the truck bed tell their crash stories in order—in a hierarchy that honors those who are oldest and those who have wrecked the worst. Bruce Hayes, the mechanic, is acknowledged by all to have had a "real bad" wreck. "I ran out of intelligence just a second before I ran out of airspeed," Hayes says. "I was on my last certification flight to become an ag pilot, and the guy who was certifying me couldn't show up at the last minute. So I said, 'Hell, I'll just fly one for fun,' and I filled the plane's hopper with water to simulate the weight of a real load." Hayes stops and smiles. "I was doing great," he says. "Really flying well, moving low and smooth over the rice fields. It was beautiful. But then I started playing around, coming down too steep, and I couldn't pull out. I didn't have any altitude, and the plane went in—and it went in *hard*. Hell, it just goes to show I had a lot to learn. I'd been going way too fast, and the aircraft hit the deck of that rice field, and, man, it was like *death*. The aircraft tore through five dikes in that rice field before it stopped. Hell, as you guys all know, I broke my neck."



Mike Akin, the airfield's gas-and-parts supplier, says, "You were so scared you got up out of the cockpit and walked off!" The crowd around the truck chuckles.

"That plane," Hayes says. "It was sitting up on its nose out in that field. The propeller was all bent back, and the plane was just sitting vertical out there, as quiet and pretty as can be." He pauses, then says, "It was in that rice field, gentlemen, right then and there, that I decided I'd rather fix ag planes than fly them. Boys, right then and there my ag-piloting days were over."

"It was those old helmets," another pilot says. "They were so heavy."

"It's not like now," Hayes says. "These days, we've got those lightweight, seven-hundred-dollar helmets like the F-14 pilots wear. Those old heavy things, if you were to wreck, they played crack-the-whip with you. The unluckiest pilots flipped upside down when they wrecked. Those old heavy helmets would keep going forward with inertia while the pilot's body was strapped into the seat. With those old helmets, sometimes a wrecked pilot's neck would stretch to two foot long." Hayes lifts his hands in the air and holds them about two feet apart; he regards the open space between his palms for a moment, then turns to Lawhon and smiles. "How 'bout your stories, Jimmy?" he says.

Lawhon shakes his head. "Man,"

he says, taking a drag from his cigarette, "I've never wrecked."

"Let's see," Hayes says, still smiling. "Let's see. The first one, Jimmy, to refresh your memory, was in the summer of 1973. You were showing off." Hayes turns to me, still talking. "Jimmy took off in an old Stearman. That's one of the old two-hole Second World War pilot trainers—they were biplanes converted for ag aviation—and he took off from here to play hard guy for some photographers who were visiting the airfield. He made a few low passes, then held the plane down for a second too long." Hayes laughs. "The aircraft's landing gear clipped a water tank, then went on to hit a levee, and then the plane came down onto a grass runway and ended up on its nose." Hayes laughs. Everyone around the truck bed begins laughing, too. "And Jimmy," Hayes says, "old handsome Jimmy, he just got out of that wrecked plane and walked away smiling."

The seventeen-year-old can't help himself. He's been hovering quietly around the truck now for two hours, listening to the stories, hearing the technical talk, and watching the swagger, and he looks about to burst with his knowledge of agricultural aviation. Finally, he asks, "What about Randy?"

"*Ohhhh*, Randy," Hayes says.

"Randy, Randy, Randy," Mike Akin adds.

"Oh, Randy," the others say.

Hayes points across the truck bed to a tall, tanned pilot of about thirty-five. "Our Randy Gibbons, over there," he says. "He's our finest achievement. Randy had *nine wrecks* in 1982 alone, two of them in the space of thirty days." Hayes hoots. "This boy probably had five per cent of America's commercial-aviation accidents that month."

"Roll-Over Randy," the others say in unison. "Roll-Over Randy."

"The boy can fly," Hayes says. "He's actually a really fine pilot. He showed up here from spraying tobacco in North Carolina, and he was the hottest stick-and-rudder man around. Then, like I say, in 1982 he got into the habit of flipping his plane over on the landings, and we took to calling him Roll-Over Randy. He went through aircraft like—"

Another pilot interrupts, "After he'd been here awhile, we were beginning to worry about the number of aircraft we had left, so we checked up on him."

"Turns out," Hayes goes on, "that back in North Carolina they used to call him Kilowatt Randy, because he kept hitting power lines."

"You boys know I'm a good pilot," Gibbons says, coming to his own defense. "I can fly as good as anybody."

Heads nod all around the truck.

"It's just that sometimes I have this trouble with my landings," he adds.

Everyone laughs again. This time, their faces are turned up, facing the deep blue of the Delta's nighttime sky. Their hoots roll out across the dark, flat concrete runways of the airfield, moving away through the darkness toward the cotton fields on the horizon.

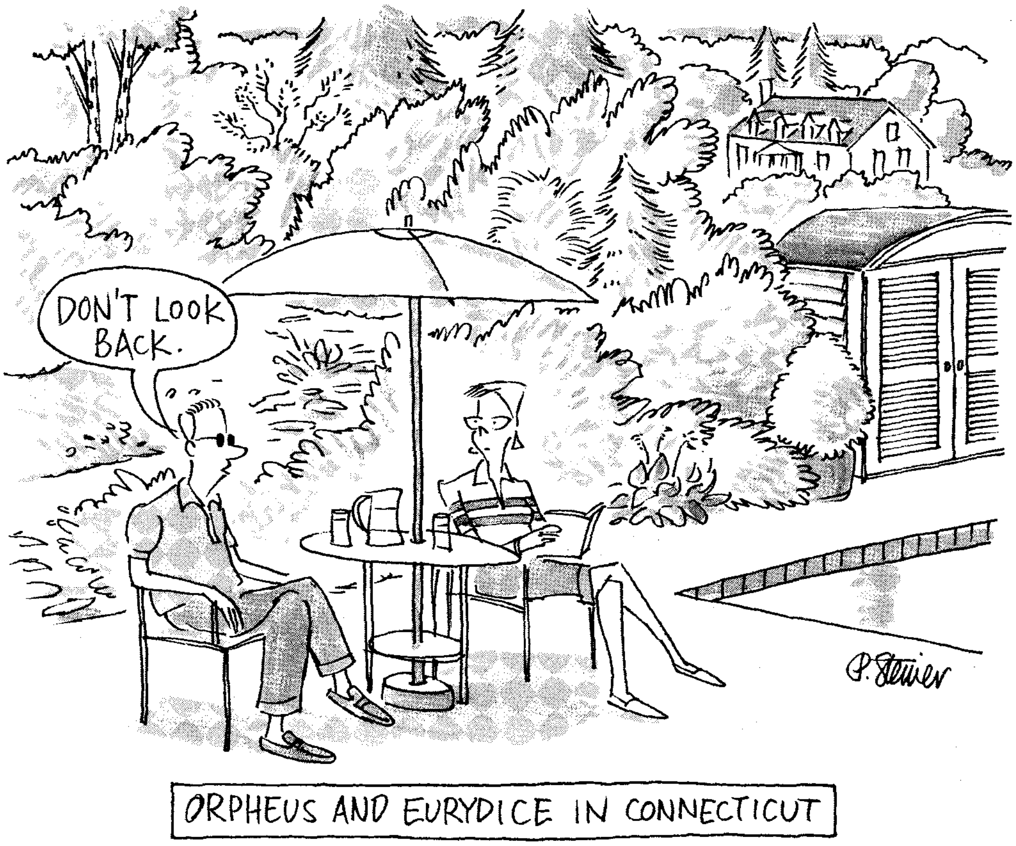
NOW it's the following morning. After the hangar's drinking crew broke up, Lawhon and I had some late dinner—or, to be more accurate, some 10 P.M. breakfast—at a local restaurant. (Lawhon devoured a dozen eggs, two orders of sausage, three orders of biscuits, an order of toast, three glasses of milk, and a vat of coffee.) Then, not feeling like driving me back to West Helena's Holiday Inn, he suggested that I sleep in the extra room at his house. He said we'd have to get up early, at five, because he had a big day of flying. It was the busiest time of the year for an ag pilot, he said, and he couldn't "wait around for some long-haired writer from New York to get his ass into gear."

I reminded Lawhon that I lived in Little Rock.

"You're still too goddam long-haired," he said. "You're probably a Communist, or something."

I said 5 A.M. would be fine.

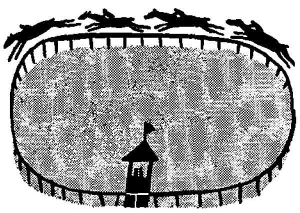
I have spent the night in Lawhon's guest room, which contains only two things: a moldy-smelling bed and a quickly revolving ceiling fan. The bed is placed near a window, which, at four-fifty-six, affords a view of the blue air of pre-sunrise West Helena. Beyond the window screen, I discover, to my surprise, that Lawhon lives in a typical suburban neighborhood. Neat bungalows line a curbed street. There are green lawns and thick trimmed hedges. In Lawhon's driveway sits a string of three pickup trucks. In front of his Chevy 1500—the truck we were



ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE IN CONNECTICUT

in last night—are two older, battered trucks. One is blue, the other pale green; the green one has very large dents all along the driver's side.

I get up and dress, then find the bathroom. I gulp cold water from the bathroom faucet, wet my face, and slick back my hair. I look around the house. The kitchen, the first room I encounter, is modern, and seemingly unused. The floor is that linoleum with small squares in varying shades of umber which was so popular in the early sixties. All the appliances—sink, range, refrigerator—are white. The ceiling is white acoustic tile. In a corner near the back door stands a monolith of red-and-white striped Kentucky Fried Chicken boxes (the three-piece-dinner size). I walk through the kitchen into the living room. It's empty except for a large-screen TV, a La-Z-Boy recliner, a metal folding chair, and a card table with a monstrously tall lamp on top of it. Also on the tabletop are plastic cigarette lighters (of various colors, including camouflage), a catalogue of airplane-engine parts, some more empty Kentucky Fried Chicken boxes, a handful of pocketknives, a few shotgun and rifle shells, empty packs of Winstons and Camels, a white plastic Arkansas Razorbacks ashtray, a couple of empty Big Gulp cups from the 7-Eleven, and several pairs of aviator sunglasses. I switch on the TV and quietly indulge in CNN for about thirty minutes, until—from virtually out of nowhere—a hungover moment sends me scrambling back to bed.



At six-thirty, the telephone rings and rings. Finally, far away, I hear Lawhon answer. "O.K., O.K.," he says from somewhere deep inside the house. "Awright then, Gus. O.K. Good. I'll be along before too long. Good. Yeah. Good. O.K. Bye."

A minute later, I can hear a shower hissing. Time to go to work.

We get in the truck, and roll out of West Helena's neighborhoods and onto deserted farm roads; a thick layer of morning mist floats across the fields. "God loves me," Lawhon says. "I don't know what I did to deserve this, but the Lord loves me. With this mist, there's no way I could have flown early this morning. Ag pilots work under laws known as V.F.R.—that's Visual Flight Rules. We don't use radios or navigational instrumentation to speak of, and if there are storms or mists in the air we're grounded. And, with what we did last night, I would have had to take a late start today anyway. There's a rule of thumb about drinking and flying. It goes 'Twelve hours from bottle to throttle,' and if you want to survive as a pilot you always try to remember it. Oh, God, thank you. I got lucky today."

I ask Lawhon about his plane wrecks. "The last one was last November," he says. "I was spraying north of town, next to this national forest over there, and the engine on this Ag-Cat I had just quit. I'd just finished flying a swath, came up over the forest, and the engine failed. Man, below me there was nothing but trees. I was so low to the ground, and I was moving so fast, that I had this much time"—he snaps his fingers—"to decide how I'd crash. There was no place to land, so I decided to glide the plane onto the smoothest-looking patch of trees out there, because trees will sometimes soften your landing if you lay your aircraft in gently enough. I was going a hundred-some miles per hour, and I had about one second to decide what to do. You've only got two decisions to make at a time like that—which patch of trees you'll use for a runway, and whether you'll cover your face or your balls on impact. I didn't get a scratch on me." He reconsiders. "No, that's wrong," he says. "I did get a scratch. When I got down out of the aircraft, I began running away, because I thought the plane was on fire and might explode. While I was running and looking over my shoulder, I tripped over a stick, or something, and fell." He holds up his left hand and points to its palm with his right index finger. "I got a cut along here from a rock." He smiles. "The insurance from that wreck bought me a nice new Turbo-thrush."

We roll up to Planter's Ag, leave the truck, and head into the office. Gus Rogers says that Lawhon's plane has been washed, gassed, and reloaded with methyl parathion. Rogers and Lawhon discuss which fields Lawhon is to spray this morning, and I move toward the office coffee machine. In minutes Lawhon is in his aircraft, rolling down the runway toward another long, hot, lucrative day of work.

A Short History of Agricultural Aviation, Part 2: In the early nineteen-twenties, Cotton Belt farmers needed a way to kill the boll weevil. Throughout the region, the little downspout-nosed beetle was destroying millions of dollars' worth of cotton crops annually, and Delta farmers were just starting to try to control the weevil by broadcasting lead arsenate and, later, calcium arsenate over their crops from behind mule-drawn, hand-cranked carts. But this primitive method of applying insecticides was only marginally effective, and after a few months of such applications the insecticides often burned sections of hide completely off the mules. Then, in 1922, Dr. Bert R. Coad, a Department of Agriculture entomologist, heard of the crop-dusting experiments at Ohio's McCook Field, and, after lobbying Congress, he transported the Air Service crop dusters to the U.S.D.A.'s Delta Laboratory, in Tallulah, Louisiana. At the Delta Lab, Dr. Coad began experimenting on cotton fields with the spreader-equipped Curtiss Jennies; the results were immediate, and resoundingly positive.

While the Delta Lab was refining ways to combat the boll weevil from the air, the crop-dusting equipment was being modified. Instead of being bolted to the side of the aircraft, for instance, the calcium-arsenate hopper was moved to a spot inside the plane's fuselage just forward of the cockpit. Then, beneath the newly installed hopper, a gravity-fed conduit tube ran from the hopper's gate to an hourglass-bodied spreader, with a scoop mouth, that was bolted horizontally to the bottom of the aircraft. This newly designed spreader, with its narrowed throat, took advantage of the venturi principle and gave off a wider, more evenly sifted layer of insecticide dust. It, too, was an instant success. Within a few years, a crop-dusting apparatus almost identical to the one used today had been engineered, and Dr. Coad's successes with aerial pesticide application ballooned.

The Army Air Service pilots were also beginning to flourish during this time. Young, capable, and probably a little bored by the entertainments of Tallulah, the Air Service fliers established the code of fast living and technically perfect flying which persists today. After sifting their loads over the Delta Lab's cotton fields, Dr. Coad's pilots would often take airborne detours on their way back to the U.S.D.A. airstrip—sometimes rolling the wheels of their aircraft across the tin roofs of tenant shacks on the cotton plantations, or, in slightly less daring moods, simply buzzing automobiles, which had only recently arrived on the Delta's roads.

As the Delta Lab successes mounted, and crop dusting became an accepted cotton-farming practice, a permanent airfield, known as Scott Field, was built for the Delta Lab fliers, three miles east of Tallulah. From its runways, Air Service dusters flew demonstration flights to plantations in Louisiana, Mississippi, and southern Arkansas. In 1923, Huff, Daland & Company, of Ogdensburg, New York, saw the huge potential of crop dusting, and in a few months a fleet of new, powerful Huff, Daland biplanes was transported south. The planes were fitted with crop-dusting rigs and put to work in the surrounding croplands, thereby making Huff, Daland the first commercial ag-flying company ever. By the end of 1924, eighteen aircraft owned by Huff, Daland were working more than fifty thousand acres of cotton.

The following year, Huff, Daland Dusters applied insecticides to almost ninety thousand acres in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi. To attract new customers, Huff, Daland pilots made demonstration crop-dusting flights across the region, which quickly proved their worth and justified their catchy slogan: "It doesn't cost to dust—it costs not to dust." The company grew quickly, extending its reach across the Delta by establishing a series of well-situated auxiliary airstrips. Then, in November of 1928, a Huff, Daland vice-president named C. E. Woolman bought the company's dusting division, for forty thousand dollars, and, after renaming it the Delta Air Service, assembled the contracts and the equipment to transport passengers and parcels around the region. Six years later, in 1934, Delta carried nearly fifteen hundred passengers and countless canvas bags of "Air Mail" throughout the South. Woolman eventually weaned his company from its crop-dusting past, and today it is known as Delta Air Lines and is the third-largest

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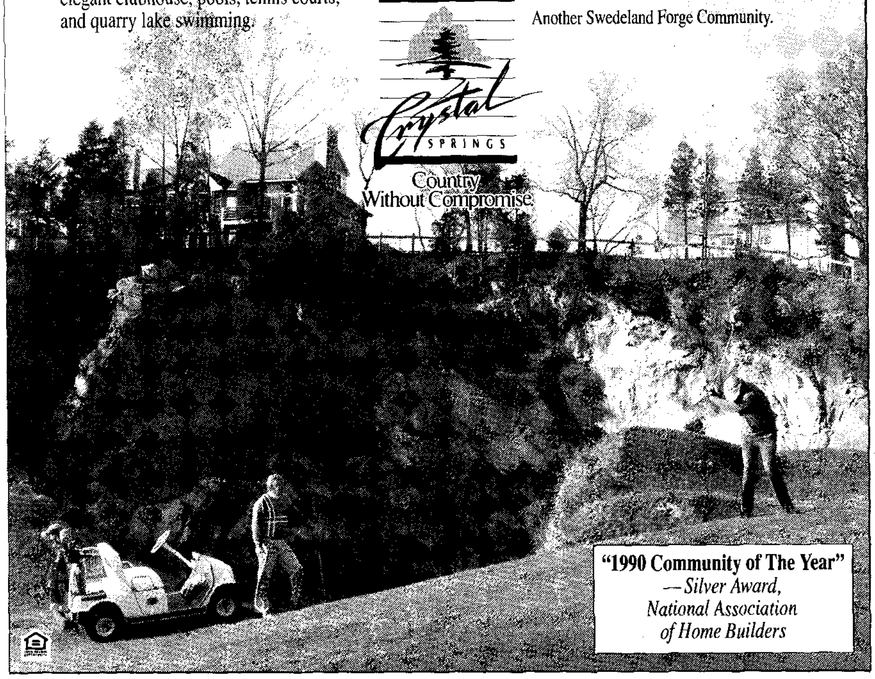

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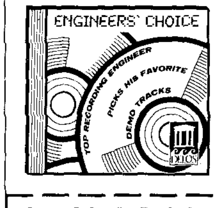


passenger-transportation company in the world.

While the business of dusting cotton was expanding, in the mid-thirties, agricultural aviation was also branching out to other areas of farming. By 1937, the U.S.D.A. was experimenting with new poisons, like nicotine sulfate and calcium cyanamid, which were broadening the variety of crops that could be tended by aircraft. Crop dusting was enjoying its honeymoon—a period that helped to raise the American farmer's cotton and produce yields by as much as twenty-five per cent. For the next thirty years, crop dusting was acknowledged to be an indisputable key to agricultural prosperity.

SINCE its inception, agricultural aviation has been a profitable yet costly business. Bruce Hayes' repair hangar at the West Helena airfield is testament to the cost of being a crop duster. Inside the hangar sit five bright-yellow crop-dusting planes, in varying states of repair. Their ribbon-thin metallic skins have been peeled off in sections and lean against the walls. In the more serious cases, the wings have been removed and stowed at the building's far end, fifty yards away. Up close, the planes seem like gigantic, highly elaborate toys; they can be snapped apart in minutes, and reassembled in the same amount of time. Hayes himself has just stepped out from under the skeletal steel body of a totally dismantled airframe to take a Coca-Cola break. He's wearing a short-sleeved navy-blue cotton shirt with an oval patch embroidered in white thread on the breast pocket. It reads:

HAYES AVIATION
BRUCE

On the back of the shirt, embroidered in two-inch-tall white script, is Hayes' professional title:

DUSTER DOCTOR

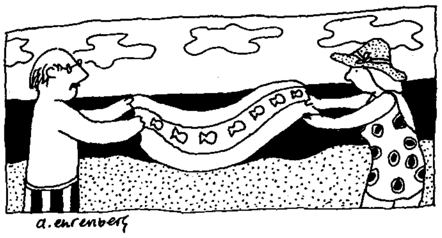
Outside the hangar, the sun burns down on the airfield, bleaching everything but the far-off cotton fields white. Hayes is talking in general terms about crop dusting. "It's greed," he says. "That's why ag flying has got so expensive. That's why crop dusters are a slowly dying breed. The aircraft-makers, they know they're necessary, so they jack up the prices of their planes. It makes it hard for young pilots to get started. Those young guys either have to work for someone else, a big dusting outfit, or they've got to shell out one blistering-ass bunch of cash for their own aircraft."

Hayes walks to what he calls his wrench table, an eight-foot-long, three-foot-wide red-enamelled rolling-steel monster from the Snap-On Tool Corporation. The table has eight tiers of drawers, and its top is littered with small motors and electric drills and tubes of grease. Eagle decals from Pratt & Whitney (the aircraft-engine maker) emblazon its sides, and a prominent skull-and-crossbones decal reading "YOU TOUCH, YOU DIE" has been applied to its backside.

Hayes picks up a bolt. "These little things," he says. "They mark them with a little insignia that identifies them as aircraft parts. And they charge us extra for these bolts, because of that little mark. We get shafted on this kind of stuff—and on the more complicated parts the cost grows plenty bigger. The new aircraft, the turbine-engined ones—they cost upward of four hundred thousand dollars, but I could assemble you a new one from scratch for two-thirds of that. And the older aircraft, the ones with the round, nine-cylinder engines, they still run about a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. And those old nine-bang numbers are becoming obsolete. Nowadays, you've got to buy reconditioned parts for them—they've been phased out of production. These days, I work on nothing but turbine aircraft. And there isn't an airframe in here right now that I'll bill less than ten thousand dollars on. Believe me, most of that cost is parts." He shakes his head. "Between the insurance and the overhead, ag aviation is one expensive way to make a living. The insurance, ultimately, is what kills the independents."

I ask about the insurance.

"The young, independent pilots can't even get it anymore," Hayes says. "There's a blanket no-go on new ag pilots. So the young guys work for flying services—the services get group insurance deals. The young guys establish a track record, and then they can get individually insured." He pauses to draw on his cigarette. "You know Lloyd's of London?" he goes on. "That company will insure you against ingrown toenails if you'll pay them the money for it. That company will insure *anything*. Or that's what everybody thinks. But until you're a second- or third-year ag pilot they won't touch you. The flying services are the only way we'll get young ag pilots. The good old days, they're over. Now the young guys show up with their helmets, fly for someone else, and pay their dues. The money, of course, isn't as good. A pilot working for a service will make—oh, maybe fifty thousand dollars a year. If you fly for yourself, you can make a lot more than that. You can net seventy to a hundred thousand dollars a year, maybe a hundred and fifty thousand, depending on how hard you want to work."



I remark that even at fifty thousand dollars a crop duster's salary is pretty favorable—especially in the Delta, where the cost of living is amazingly low.

"Yeah, man, that's true," Hayes says, smiling. "But then if you're working for yourself all it takes is one bad year, and you're done. The insurance man takes his twenty thousand dollars a year, and the note on the aircraft is about ninety thousand dollars a year. And then there's the cost of fixing the aircraft when you don't want to report the damage, and there's the plane's general upkeep, and the up-front cost of the chemicals you lay out, plus all the usual overhead of running a business. Man, it's just like all farming—you can get deep-tanked in the blink of an eye if you don't stay lucky. It's no wonder some of the boys look for other ways to make money."

I ask how they do that.

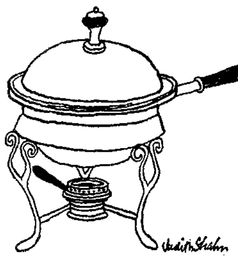
"Some of 'em—not too many, but some—they'll haul parcels," Hayes says.

"What kind of parcels?" I ask.

"Oh, about anything," Hayes says. "For the right price."

Hayes finishes his Coke and snuffs out his cigarette against the hangar floor. "There are boys around here, guys who're still flying ag aircraft, who make a couple extra hundred thousand dollars every year hauling packages," he says. Then he tells the story of Gary Betzner, an ag pilot from the Delta town of Hazen, Arkansas, who, in September, 1977, faked suicide by leaping off a bridge into the White

River. On November 13, 1984, a man named Lucas Noel Harmony was arrested in Jacksonville, Florida, when he landed there in an airplane that contained seventeen duffelbags and two boxes full of cocaine. After a quick fingerprint check, Harmony proved to be Gary Betzner, and during Betzner's drug-trafficking trial—at the end of which he received a twenty-seven-year sentence—his tales of dirt airstrips in Central America, of gun-for-drug transactions, and of eluding United States Drug Enforcement Agency and Customs Department agents earned him a hearing before Senator John Kerry and his Iran-Contra subcommittee.



"Everybody who knew Gary Betzner also knew he wasn't dead," Hayes says. "A lot of pilots end up doing what Betzner did. It's just most of them don't get in as deep. I once saw an ag pilot who had a paper sack on his pickup truck's seat, and inside that sack was fifty thousand dollars in counted, stacked twenty-dollar bills." Hayes pauses, shakes his head, and grins. "Gary Betzner, though," he finally says, "he's gone. We haven't had word of him since he went to Washington, D.C., to testify at those Iran-Contra hearings. He's probably back in federal prison now."

Hayes shouts to Mike Akin, the gas-and-parts supplier, who sits in a parts-choked room connected to the hangar, "Hey, Mike! What's up with Gary Betzner?"

Akin, a medium-sized man with astonishingly blue eyes, strolls out of his office. He lights a cigarette as he advances across the huge, dark floor of the hangar. "Last I heard, he was guest-starring for the government," Akin says. "But that was more than a year ago. Man, that boy is one fine pilot gone wrong." Akin arrives at the wrench table. "What's going on?" he says. "You guys talking free-lance?"

I say yes. Hayes nods.

"You know," Akin says to Hayes, "Don, here, should go out and talk to Melvin."

"Man," Hayes says, "Don couldn't get out there right now—the river's too high. With all this rain, he couldn't get out there till Christmas."

"Boy, Don," Akin says to me, "you could learn—I mean *learn*—any number of things from Melvin, ag flying included. He was a Second World War bomber pilot. He was a thirty-year crop duster. Man, he knows *all*."

I ask who Melvin is.

"He's my dad," Hayes says. "And if there's a guy who knows this industry it's him. But he lives down in the bottoms, back in there where the Arkansas and White and Mississippi Rivers all run together. This time of year, he's up on a high knoll somewhere catching fish and living without electricity or running water. The bugs and snakes are awful. If you had a month, you likely couldn't find him. And even if you *did* find him it would be because he let you." Hayes pauses. Then, as if to warn me further, he says, "Word has it those woods hold some Claymore anti-personnel mines, too. And if you did go out there and find him he probably wouldn't talk. He's not a big talker."

"Unless you took along some liquor," Akin says. "You might get him talking then."

"JUST sit on down there," Melvin Hayes says. "Make yourself at home." He motions toward a green five-gallon bucket turned bottom up. The bucket is next to a smoldering fire. It's early January now, a Saturday afternoon, and I've finally found Melvin. His camp is a scene from a Hollywoodized survivalist movie. Scattered concentrically farther and farther away from the fire are a pair of rusting metal deck chairs, a few flat-bottomed johnboats, some rusted iron skillets, two orange-and-white plastic coolers, a yellow school bus up on blocks, and a prodigious, five-foot-tall mound of empty, crushed, slowly corroding Budweiser cans. Farther away is Hayes' shack, a plywood box on ten-foot stilts. The shack sits on the highest knoll in the swamp, a last-ditch position against flooding.

We are in the deepest of all Arkansas forests—miles from the nearest road (paved or not)—and monstrous dormant trees, mostly cypress and water oak, create a dense screen above and around us. Somewhere a few miles east of where we sit, the deep-brown Mississippi River rushes toward the

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Gulf of Mexico. The wind blows through the swamp, whipping the acrid smoke into whorls and cutting through our insulated coveralls like a razor. The ground is paved with fallen leaves; they're brown and gold, curling and mist-sodden in the growing darkness. A pack of at least twenty hounds swarms near the fire. They're all Hayes' coonhounds and squirrel hounds—and they have names like Moon, Troubles, Tom, and Tom-Two.

"Crop dusting," Hayes says. "Crop dusting." He hobbles toward one of the chairs. His limp is a reminder that he broke his ankle and leg back in October, when he wrecked a three-wheeled all-terrain vehicle and was pinned beneath it. He managed to pull himself free from the accident, but since he lives alone in the bottoms—easily a day from the nearest hospital—he set the leg himself, by tying a half-inch-thick nylon rope to the ankle, knotting the rope's other end to the ladder of his shack, and "jerking the bones straight." His home remedy may have spared him gangrene, but it has left him with a blackened, six-inch-wide gnarl of an ankle and a permanent gimp. "Crop dusting," he says again. "Have you talked to anyone else about this?"

I mention half a dozen pilots.

"*Those* guys," Hayes says. "They're not dusters. Those guys are *ag pilots*." He shakes his head. "Have you talked to any *old*-timers? Guys like me, who laid out cyanide, black annie, DDT—stuff like that?"

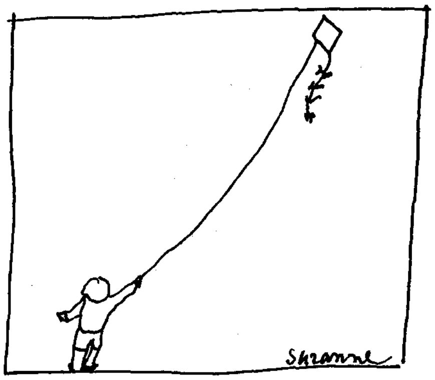
I say no.

Melvin Hayes is sixty-nine years old. He is compact and lean; he has a scraggly white beard that conceals his mouth. When he tilts his head back to laugh (as he does often), you get a view of rotted, splintered, tobacco-stained stumps that were formerly his teeth. Despite his mountain-man looks, his manners are direct from Amy Vanderbilt. He has offered food. He has offered drink. He has given me a tour of his miles of surrounding bayou, stopping to explain each time I showed interest in a fish weir or a deer stand or some of his other means of gathering food from the forest.

"I've flown over cotton, rice, beans," he says. "I've dusted tomatoes and onions. Tomatoes and onions are what I worked right after the war. Then, in 1951, I came back to Arkansas and started flying for old Nathan Jones, in DeWitt. Jones was a good man. He'd been a flight instructor in the military. I flew for Jones for four years, then went to work for myself in Gillette, Arkansas, flying an old Stearman."

For most of ag aviation's history, Stearman aircraft have been the industry's standard airframe. During the Second World War, the Stearman biplane—made by Boeing in its Wichita factory—was the G.I. pilot-training aircraft. Then, after the war, with a vast surplus of Stearman pilot trainers, the government liquidated the planes, and the ag pilots and flying services bought all that were available. In the late nineteen-forties, two hundred dollars could buy a pilot an almost new Stearman. They were top-heavy and sometimes uncontrollable on the ground, but in the air they were as forgiving as any plane that has ever flown. A pilot in a Stearman could go into a flat spin—the most dangerous of all crash attitudes, because the plane rotates horizontally—and as often as not the Stearman could correct itself and get out of trouble. Not that the Stearmans were perfect in the air; they were light and underpowered. Compared with today's ag aircraft, the Stearmans were mosquitoes. The production models had two-hundred-and-twenty-horsepower engines, which seem rubber-band-powered next to today's standard seven-hundred-horse turbine models. But the Stearmans had two special advantages—they were plentiful, and they were inexpensive.

"I was taught to fly by the Army Air Corps," Hayes goes on. "When I first went into the military, at the start of the Second World War, they didn't have any pilots. I went to mechanics' school in Wichita Falls, then I went to a mechanics' specialty school at Santa Monica, California. I worked my way up to staff sergeant. Then, one day, this guy came out to the airfield where I was working, and he said, 'Hayes, if you can pass the entry tests, you can go to flying school.' They needed pilots. So I went down and passed that little old test. There wasn't nothing to it. You had to put a square peg into a square hole. I learned to fly, got bounced around to a number of different training grounds, then I went overseas as a co-pilot on a B-17. My pilot was moved to another aircraft, and I was made a full pilot. I flew lots of missions—I was the high man in the twelve-aircraft bombing formation. After the war, I wanted to stay in the Army, but, with the reduction in forces and a few other things, I was placed off active duty. I'd got married by that time, so I had to make some regular money. I met an old boy named Jack Barnes down in Laredo, Texas, and he's who I flew ag for first. Dusting tomatoes and onions. I went from flying a five-thousand-horsepower bomber to a sixty-five-horse J-3 Cub. We were putting out sulfur dust. That sulfur dust was highly explosive, and the planes were rigged with their exhaust going up over the wings, because when that dust ignited in the exhaust wash you'd look back and see a string of fire coming up from behind you, and all you could do was close the hopper gate as tight as you could, pull up to the right, and pray that you'd get away from the fire—else you'd burn up in that airplane. It was dangerous. Then I went into official crop dusting. Cotton. I worked in Winnsboro, Louisiana; Clarksdale, Mississippi; Gin City, Arkansas; and a couple places outside Lubbock, Texas. I sprayed a lot of cotton. We used sulfur dust mixed with DDT and benzene hexachloride. Those old cockpits weren't sealed too good, and that stuff would come back and burn you like crazy. It would get caked on your face. Your gullet would get full of it, and tears would start running out your eyes. And the more the tears ran down, the more that stuff burned. But I managed to survive it."



Hayes shakes his head. He lifts his right hand from the chair arm and points a finger my way. "Then Miss Rachel Carson came along, and in 1962 she wrote a little book called 'Silent Spring,'" he says. "And because of it they outlawed DDT. Said DDT was bad for the planet. That was the beginning of the end—that was when Congress got involved in crop dusting. I laid out tons of DDT, and I don't know that it ever hurt me any. I've eaten more DDT than about anybody, and my son was born fine. He came to earth bald and naked. I've never been sick a day in my life. I've never been to a doctor, except when I had my Army physicals. Never had a cold, or anything. There's a cult of medicine these days, and people look to those doctors like priests. People who need to take better care of themselves, they use doctors to get out of things. Hell, I busted my leg in two places, and I still haven't been to a doctor. Though I must say I didn't set my ankle exactly right. Never been to a dentist, either. But you can probably tell that.

"I got into rice growing—fertilizing and seeding fields from the air. Then we started spraying hormonal herbicides. The original one was something called 2,4-D, and it worked well. It killed weeds and some of the bugs. Then, at just about that same time, this really fine herbicide came along. It was called 2,4,5-T, and it was what that Agent Orange stuff they used in Vietnam was. Hormonal herbicides make weeds grow themselves to death. When those weeds get sprayed, their growth speeds up considerably, and they don't have reserve food, so they start eating themselves to keep growing. It kills 'em.

"I sprayed those supposedly bad chemicals for most of my adult life, and the only health effect they ever gave me was that one day I spilled some DDT on my boot and it cured my athlete's foot. I'd had athlete's foot real bad, and two days later it was gone. So I spilled some onto my other boot, and I ain't never had athlete's foot from that day forward. And, far as I know, that's the only thing it'll do to a human being. Here I am, sixty-nine years old and still moving. I can still run a chain saw all day long. I can haul heavy stuff. I can break my ankle. I could still fly an airplane if I wanted. But at a certain age your reflexes aren't as good as they used to be. I'd guess that if you gave me an airplane today and thirty minutes to learn it I could keep up with the hottest pilot there is. But after a couple of days of flying I'd give out. It's the day-to-day concentration that gets you. You get older and your reflexes aren't as sturdy. I might still be flying, except my son tore up my last old Stearman. He went out and broke his neck in it. Literally broke his neck. Tore the aircraft all to pieces. Then I decided I'd had enough, and I moved down here to the bottoms. I was gonna quit flying altogether, but I didn't.

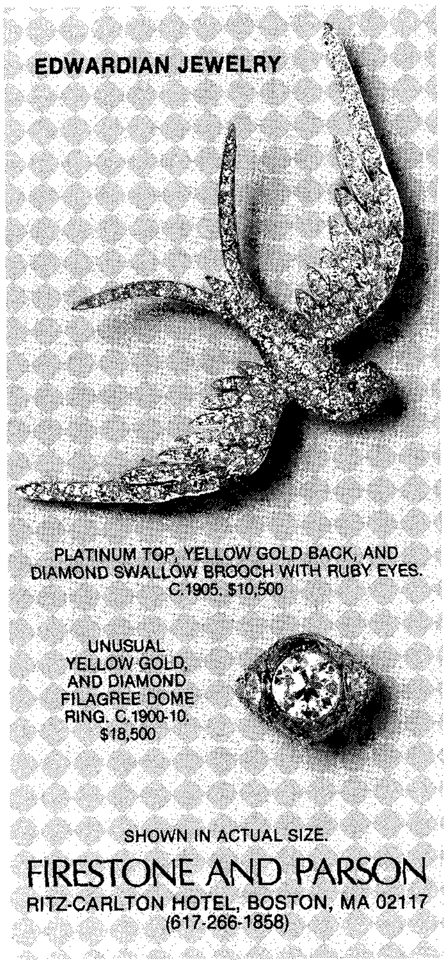
"One day in 1976, Bruce, my son, came down and told me that there was somebody who needed a pilot to take an aircraft from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and not get lost. And I said, 'I'm your man.' I did that job, then got into ferrying aircraft. Spent the next five years just moving airplanes around the country. All because I didn't get lost. In 1978, I visited every state in the Lower Forty-eight ferrying airplanes. I never had time to do my laundry. They trusted me. I didn't get lost. You've probably heard the stories: an old boy somewhere, he picks up an airplane in New York State and ferries it to the Delta by way of Miami. This old boy wasn't doing anything but ferrying a plane. He wasn't flying contraband. He just got lost."

There's a long pause, and then Hayes says, "You get offers to fly contraband all the time, everybody does. All those boys you've been talking to get offers all the time, but they'll never tell you about it. Yep, no matter what our President says, drugs are still America's biggest growth industry. I tell you, though, I've ferried a lot of aircraft, from New York to California to North Carolina, and I've never had a federal inspector look in the hopper of the aircraft. Not once. They may have checked in the hopper at night, when I was gone up to the motel or something, but I've never seen it. I did lot's of ferrying, too. I was a soldier of fortune. I did a little bit of everything."

Hayes sits quietly in his chair; a half dozen of his hounds lie piled around his legs. The wind blows the fire smoke around.

"Soldier of fortune?" I say.

"Yeah," Hayes says. He looks down at my tape recorder, which is placed on the wet dirt between us. "Back when old John F. Kennedy was President," he finally says, "there was this military operation called the Bay of Pigs. I was hired to fly. A lot of the old military pilots from the Delta were re-upped. It was good money, fine money. Then, when Bay of Pigs came apart, we got those boys out of Cuba and the government kept me on. It became my job to get political pris-



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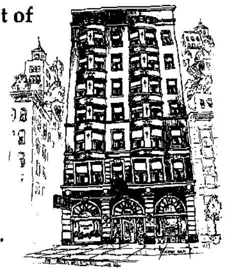

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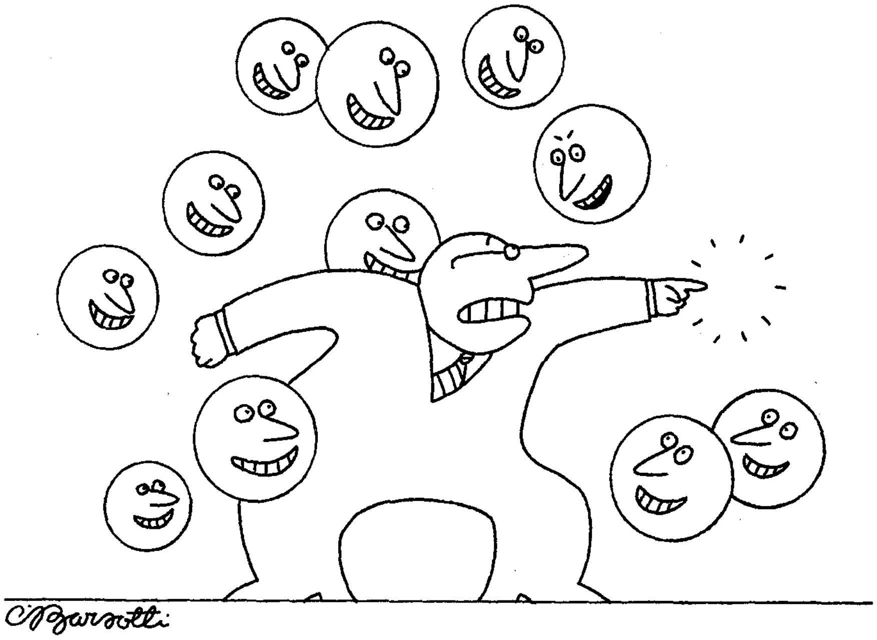


"Well, darn, C.J., that wasn't me, either. Want to try again?"

oners out of Cuba. I flew twin-engine aircraft down there and landed on dirt roads at night. I flew Piper Aztecs and Aero Commanders, anything fast and small. It was crazy back then. The C.I.A. would sanction one side, then the Customs or Treasury agents would come roust you when you got back home. The government worked both sides. That way, they were covered. Immokalee, Florida—that was usually my base. I'd be home in Arkansas, and I'd get a telephone call from somebody with a fake name and a Miami phone number. Then I'd head out to Immokalee, rent an aircraft, and fly out. Some nights, going down to Cuba, we hauled firebombs. Naphtha and phosphorus. You'd slipknot them to the underside of your aircraft's wings, then you'd just pull the strings when you felt like bombing Cuba. We'd bomb sugarcane fields or the edges of towns, just to piss Castro off. And when those bombs would hit the ground, man, they'd start burning. One of them once hit on some big wheel's patio. Or that was the report we got back. A lot of stuff went on like that. I ran guns down to Cuba, too, for an old Australian out of the Dominican Republic. He had the money, and I had the time. In those days, it was wide open."

The darkness of Saturday night is gently folding down on the bottoms now. The fire is smoldering lower, and the dogs are swarming nearer its warmth. Though Melvin Hayes is only a few feet from me, I can barely see him. "The ag fliers are always gonna be contraband fliers," he says. "It's fun for them. That's why the drug and gun suppliers come to us. We fly low to the ground, so the Customs people and the D.E.A. have to follow along behind us in planes. They can't track us on radar—we fly too low. So they tail along behind. And when we hit land—we dip down below the trees, into the Spanish moss, and, man, those D.E.A. pilots give up. To those D.E.A. guys, flying is just a job. That kind of dangerous flying ain't worth getting killed over. To the ag pilots, though, that kind of flying is fun. After a while, flying ag isn't interesting enough anymore, so you got to find other ways to have fun. Eventually, though, they catch up with you. That's what happened to me. They sent the tax man after me. That's where you get into trouble. I didn't have too much hassle with the tax guys, but I don't do hauling anymore, because they watch my bank accounts and tax returns."

Hayes looks up and around, staring out at the tangle of tree limbs and brown water in the darkness. He inhales a deep breath through his nose. "It ain't really bad out here," he says. "I have more money than I'll ever need. And there's an old boy who delivers cases of beer, and ice, and radio batteries to me. That's all I need from the outside world. I don't have big needs anymore. All I need is my cold beer and the radio. I love that Randy Travis. And George Jones. And those Paul Harvey newscasts. Red Neck, White Socks, and Blue Ribbon Beer, that's me. Here in the bottoms, I can do what I want. I don't have any neighbors. I know where the deer are. I know where the fish are. I've counted fifty-one different kinds of ants down here. Some people would say this is a little spare, but it's comfortable."

RAIN again. It's yet another July-afternoon cloudburst, and Jim Lawhon, Gus Rogers, and I are holed up inside the Planter's Ag office, waiting out the storm. "Look at me," Lawhon is saying, again and again. He's smoking cigarettes and pacing. Every once in a while, he stops at one of the windows and stares into the rain.

Ten minutes ago, Lawhon was out working, fertilizing a flooded rice field west of town. Not wanting to repeat his dicey flying of a few days back, he outpaced today's storm, beating it home to the Planter's Ag runway, where he has tethered the aircraft to the asphalt with steel cables. The relative safety of the Planter's Ag shack has not lifted his mood. He looks out at the Turbo-thrush, which hops on the pavement, fighting the tether lines, as gusts of wind get beneath its wings. He walks to his desk and lights up another Winston. He begins pacing again. "You know what *else* you see when you look at me?" he says, turning to face me. "You see the last of a type, the last generation of independent ag pilots."

"Aw, *Jesus*, Jimmy," Rogers pipes up. "It's just *rain*, man."

"No, really," Lawhon says to Rogers. "And, Gus, you know this is true. There are only a few guys younger than me that're flying independently. And I'm forty-five. I'm no young man. There just aren't new, young pilots coming up, like there used to be."

Rogers nods. "That's true," he says.

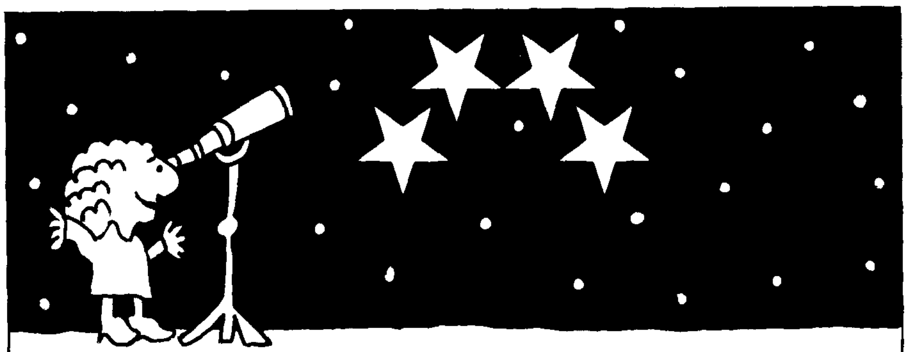
I ask Lawhon what will replace ag flying in the future.

"Oh, no," Lawhon says. "You're getting this wrong. There'll always be ag fliers. The farmers need us. But there won't be any *independent* guys left. It's just getting too expensive. The young pilots today, they're gonna fly for the big services. Some will even contract out to fly solely for the largest agri-corporations. That's the way American agriculture is going—it's become a volume business. Us small independents, the ag pilots and farmers, we're being forced out by the marketplace. The equipment costs too much, the materials are too expensive, and then"—Lawhon sweeps his arm broadly toward the rain outside—"when the weather turns bad, we independents can't make enough money to feed our dogs, much less run a business."

It's an hour later, the rain is still falling, and Lawhon decides that the day's flying is over. He and I walk out of the Planter's Ag office and head for his truck. He has suggested that we "go find a couple of beers, not too many, but a couple," and bring them back to the shack, where Rogers has started organizing the month's carboned job invoices. On the ride into town, I learn more of Lawhon's history. He grew up in the area, and has never married. Shortly after undergoing rehabilitation for his war injuries, in 1972, he returned home and learned to fly commercially. Then, late that year, he met Captain Al Verrico, who ran a salvage-diving operation in New Orleans, and Verrico persuaded Lawhon to give up flying and go to work underwater, raising towboats and river barges in the Crescent City's harbor. "My salary was a hundred dollars a day, in cash," Lawhon says. "It was good work, period: interesting and a little dangerous. And on dry land, man, in New Orleans, I had a big time. I about crapped money. But I also missed the flying. So at Thanksgiving of 1973, after a year or so of salvage diving, I came home and went to work full time as an ag pilot."

Until 1975, Lawhon and Rogers both worked for the McCarty Flying Service, at Thompson-Robbins Airfield. "Then, after a series of jobs, sometimes flying some real trash, Gus and I decided to go out on our own," Lawhon says. In 1981, Lawhon got some bank loans for his first ag aircraft (a Schweizer Ag-Cat biplane), rented the Planter's Ag shack, laid down an airstrip, and went to work for himself. "That's why I worry so much now," Lawhon explains. "That's why I'm getting this gray hair. I've got ten years of sweat and money invested in Planter's Ag. So when it rains like this, damn it, I worry about filling my orders. I worry about cash flow. I worry about"—he tosses up his hands—"everything."

Lawhon steers the truck into the



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parking lot of Alpe's Liquor Store, a corrugated-steel shack at the edge of town. The store's walls are lined with glass-fronted beer and soda coolers. Behind the cash-register counter, which faces the front wall, are bottles of liquor. The store seems deserted.

"I'm here to *rob* this place," Lawhon announces.

There's a shuffling noise from a back room, and two enormous figures step through a door behind the register counter. Both men are thickset and bearded; they're like bison. By my estimate, each is six feet four inches tall and weighs two hundred and seventy-five pounds.

"Lawhon!" one of the men says.

"Hey, Jimmy," says the other.

Introductions are made, and Lawhon and I follow the men into the back room. Just inside the doorway I notice a small table to the left. Two .45-calibre automatic pistols lie on the table, along with brass knuckles, a wooden cudgel with a leather wrist lanyard, and some clips of ammunition.

One of the men notices me staring at the coffee-table armory. "They're beautiful, aren't they?" he says of the pistols. "We used to get robbed pretty regularly. Then we bought those things and waved 'em around a little bit. We never have trouble anymore."

Lawhon unlatches the door of a large, walk-in refrigerator and disappears inside. He returns a minute later with two six-packs of Budweiser. We discuss the day's rain with the bison men for a moment, pay for the beer, and return to the truck.

On the ride back to Planter's Ag, windshield wipers slapping, I ask how ag pilots bill for their services.

"I'll tell you, I've been doing it now for more than fifteen years, and I still don't understand it," Lawhon says. "All I know for sure is that for me to pay for that nice new Turbo-thrush I have to gross between four hundred and five hundred dollars every hour I'm in the air. It's a formula. Each hour that I put on my plane's tachometer, I try to cover about three hundred acres. You've seen Gus taking job orders on those tickets back at the shack? Well, Gus logs in each job by the farmer, the chemicals sprayed, and the acres covered. Our fees start at about two and a half dollars an acre and go up to about four dollars, usually for putting herbicide on rice." Lawhon turns the truck onto the farm road leading to Planter's Ag. "Then, about once a month—and that's what we're doing today—Gus and I sit down," he says. "We separate out the invoices by farmer, tote up what we've sprayed where, and send the farmers their bills."

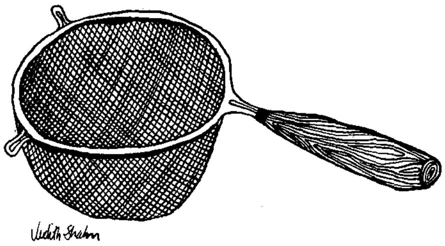
I ask whether the farmers ever feel they've been overcharged.

"Not often," Lawhon says. "Gus takes care of all that up front. He's got a great memory for prices and estimates, and, of course, we've got our records to help us. We're not here to rip anybody off. The slick ag pilots, the ones who come in overcharging or undercharging, they don't stay in business long. The farmers talk to one another, and if a pilot's charging too much for his services he won't get business for long. If a pilot's trying to lowball all the other pilots, undercharging the market, it'll eventually eat into his overhead. This isn't New York, it ain't about quick-buck scams. The farmers and ag fliers want to stay here. They know what they're buying and selling. They know what fair prices are. If some new pilot comes in offering too good a deal, everybody gets suspicious."

The rain is still falling as the truck pulls into the muddy parking area at Planter's Ag. I gather up the beer and follow Lawhon inside. As we step through the screen door, Rogers looks up from his desk. He's punching numbers into a calculator and riffling a stack of green-tinted invoices. He looks at Lawhon, then at me. With a tilt of his head, Rogers motions for Lawhon to look at his desk. On Lawhon's desk are more stacks of invoices, each stack bound by a thin, pale rubber band. Lawhon's face clouds.

"That's right, Jimmy," Rogers says. "No beer until we get this stuff added up."

NINETY minutes later, Rogers has finished tallying his half of the Planter's Ag tickets for July. He and I head through the screen door for the porch, leaving Lawhon inside, slaving away at his calculator. On the porch, we sit on planked benches beneath the sloped roof; the rain is still falling, and it rolls off the roof's lip like a watery curtain. "This is an amazing business," Rogers says. "Especially if you're an independent. You have to watch it constantly. It's like nurturing a plant. You're always tending it, keeping up with it. You're worried either about money or about equipment or about environmental laws. It's always something different, but it's always something."



I ask Rogers about the Environmental Protection Agency.

"The E.P.A.—they're not bad," he says. "They're pretty realistic about our work. They know that we're necessary to the economy here, and that we're careful with our chemicals. They know we're not screwing up the environment—killing fish, and things. There's this E.P.A. lady who came down here awhile back to look us over. I was loading certain chemicals into Jimmy's plane, and she told me to wear an India-rubber suit when I'm doing that. But she knows I won't wear that suit. It's ninety-seven degrees out, and I'm working in the sun on a black asphalt loading area. I ain't gonna wear no heavy rubber suit. Not ever. I won't even wear those elbow-length rubber gloves. But she has to say her warnings, because that's her job, and the E.P.A. laws say I have to hear her. The E.P.A.'s like that. They're not bad. They test all the new ag chemicals coming out. Not only for what they'll do to the environment but for what they'll do to the people who work with them. The E.P.A.—they're looking out for people as much as for the environment. They're realistic. It's the damned environmentalists, they're who'll drive you crazy.

"You ever see an environmentalist on the TV?" Rogers goes on. "While he's standing there saying don't use chemicals on cotton, what's he wearing? Is he wearing bluejeans and a shirt? Is he wearing a suit? Aren't all those things made of cotton? Where the hell does Mr. Environmental Protector think that cotton comes from?"

Rogers stares out into the rain. "Then Mr. Environmental Protector starts talking about how we need to use cotton diapers, because the plastic ones are bad for the environment," he says. "In his next breath, he's arguing with himself. So what's he want? Plastic?

Cotton? I'll tell you what he wants—he wants it all. And the dangerous part is, if that environmentalist can get people behind him from the TV exposure, then he can affect the laws. He can force tighter E.P.A. controls, he can work to outlaw certain chemicals. And those chemicals Mr. Environmentalist wants nixed, they're always the most effective ones—and they're usually the *least expensive* ones. The newer, synthetic chemicals, they're much more expensive, which only makes the price of bluejeans higher. So sooner or later Mr. Environmentalist will start bawling about the high price of bluejeans, too. He'll go complaining that folks less fortunate than him can't buy bluejeans anymore."

A minute later, Lawhon comes out onto the porch, the screen door clacking shut behind him. "O.K.," Lawhon says. "All done."

Rogers turns to look at his partner. "Good," he says.

"What are you guys talking about?" Lawhon asks.

"Environmentalists," Rogers says.

Lawhon slaps at the air. "In that case," he says, turning and walking toward his truck, "I'm tired. I'm going home."

DESPITE all the claims of ag people that "it's never hurt me," the application of agricultural chemicals remains a potentially dangerous matter. The effects of 2,4-D, for example, are currently under scrutiny by two government agencies—the National Cancer Institute and the E.P.A.—because of a Cancer Institute study that found a correlation between 2,4-D and elevated risks of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma among those who work with it. "The stumbling block to all these studies thus far is that it's impossible to identify concretely the specific link between certain forms of cancer and herbicides generally," says John Doull, the chairman of the toxicology committee for the National Academy of Sciences and a professor of toxicology at the University of Kansas Medical School. "There are too many other factors to consider. How often do these people use these chemicals? For how many years have they used them? What other carcinogens do they work with? All of these things have to be factored in. Any scientist who has studied these substances can show that people who work regularly with herbicides, especially 2,4-D, have an elevated risk of cancer, but nobody can present the exact cause-and-effect link. So while the heightened risk is almost universally agreed upon, without the specific link what we've got isn't good, solid science."

Yet, if the medical evidence on agrichemicals is less than conclusive, there remains universal respect for the power of agri-dusts and liquids. No pilot in the Delta, however cavalier, goes out of his way to work with the chemicals that are applied there. After extensive E.P.A. testing, the character of every pesticide, fungicide, herbicide, and plant treatment now used in the United States is recorded in the crop duster's bible—a 2,371-page handbook entitled "Crop Protection Chemical Reference." Five hundred and sixty-one substances are indexed there, and the handbook carries precautionary statements about risk to human, plant, or animal life from all of them.

Though farmers, fliers, and environmentalists will all readily admit that today's ag chemicals are less dangerous to man and planet than they were in the days of calcium arsenate, a growing number of environmentalists feel that pesticide and herbicide reform is still too slow in coming. "The denial that the aerial applicators use about how personally and environmentally dangerous these substances are is a self-defense mechanism," says Janet Hathaway, a senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "The aerial applicators rightfully see tightening pesticide and herbicide laws as a threat to their livelihoods, but, while tragic from a career standpoint, those laws are a survival issue from human-health and environmental ones. We now have verifiable human data indicating that many herbicides, including 2,4-D, are carcinogenic. Years of tests have proved that to be true. The danger is no longer speculative. The *degree* of hazard arising from use of these chemicals—that remains debatable. But the hazard to human lives is established. Now, environmentalists—at least, the realistic ones—know that some chemical use is a fact of modern farming, but the fact remains that there is a very real human hazard in using many agricultural chemicals, and for the sake of both people and the environment changes need to be made."

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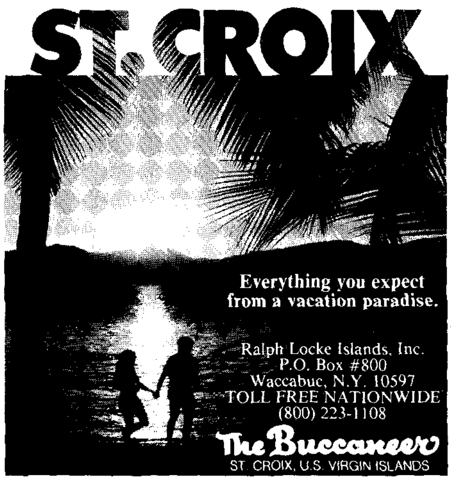
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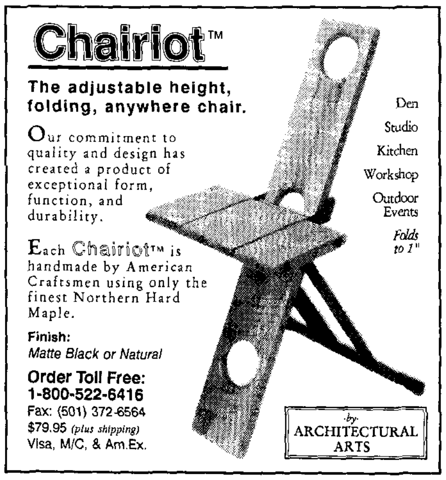
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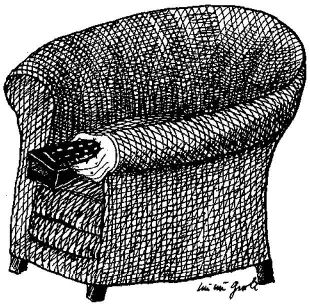
ing war against agri-chemicals, American farming has started to experiment with weed-and-pest-control techniques such as the Integrated Pest Management Plan—a program that monitors insect and weed populations in fields instead of simply dosing crops with chemicals on calendrical cycles. When a field's insect or weed density passes an established threshold, the farmer or ag pilot applies just enough pesticide or herbicide to constitute a lethal dose. This kind of management dramatically reduces the amount of poison spread on a field, and helps keep excess chemicals from running off into watersheds or leaching into the soil. Other anti-chemical reforms include the biotech movement, which is using genetic engineering to develop hardier, less vulnerable crops. And, in a still newer chemical-free agriculture, called alternative-use farming, a farmer with a real or anticipated insect problem introduces predators or competitors of that insect into his fields. Amazingly, the competition by "beneficial bugs" virtually keeps the insect populations in check, though the introduction of new insects into fields can have unpredictable results, such as the infestation of crops that haven't been targeted.

But it isn't simply these isolated, less chemically dependent farming techniques that presage changes for the ag fliers. The advent of liquid pesticides and herbicides has made it possible for farmers to use ground-based, rolling machinery to apply pressurized pesticide and herbicide liquids to trees and plants from nozzle-studded booms—an advance that has slowly made ag aviation obsolete for crops like apples and grapes. Though ground-based sprayers require hours to do what a boom-equipped aircraft can accomplish in minutes, they can spray pesticides and herbicides precisely onto apple trees, grapevines, and similar site-specific crops without coating the earth around them; thus, not only is the effectiveness of the chemicals far better utilized but far less damage is done to the surrounding environment. Certain croplands, such as flooded rice fields or swampy cotton or bean tracts, will always require tending from the air, and that means that, as Jim Lawhon notes, "there will always be ag fliers." But new farming and ag-chemical-application techniques may prove to be the leading edge of an industry-wide drop in demand for ag pilots. "There will always be some aerial applicators around," Janet Hathaway says. "Farming occasionally demands that agricultural chemicals be distributed from the air. But the market also demands more pesticide-free farming. Human-health concerns demand that we use fewer herbicides and pesticides on our crops. And a greater concern for the environment demands more chemical-free farming, too. It's a sad development for the agricultural-aviation industry, that's true, but it's a development that's coming nonetheless."



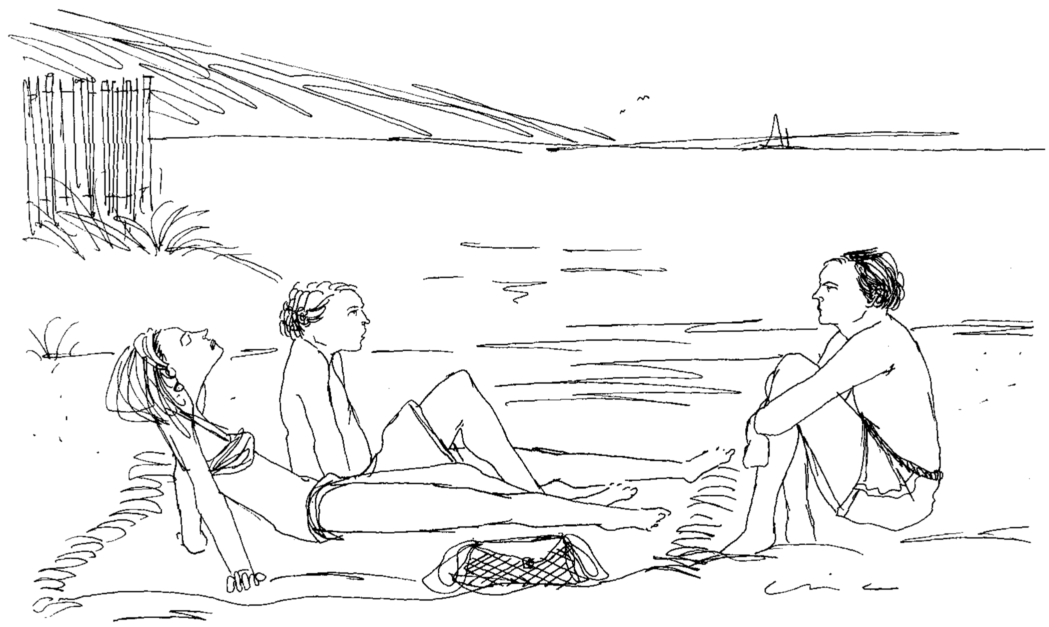
THE Delta city of Helena, Arkansas—sister city to West Helena—is an old cotton town. In the eighteen-forties, it rivalled Memphis in size and economic force. It had its own cotton exchange, and, as the seat of Phillips County, it had a grand three-story county courthouse made of brick. It had large, ornate Victorian houses all along its river bluff, and rows of huge cotton warehouses lined its wharf. With the coming of the boll weevil, however, and with the growth of Memphis (whose larger, cobbled river landing could handle bigger shipments), Helena eventually found itself falling behind as a business center, and it began settling into the vaguely crumbling beauty of an Old South river city that it is today. These days, the fastest-growing thing in Helena is kudzu, a leguminous vine that was imported from Japan. It was used in the nineteen-thirties as a means of battling soil erosion, and since that time it has blanketed the entire region, growing faster than my scarlet runner bean could have hoped to grow. Kudzu is everywhere in Helena. It covers hillsides, trees, grain elevators, and house trailers like a soft green drift of snow. It engulfs newly erected telephone poles in a matter of months. If you go on vacation and leave your car parked near a growth of kudzu, when you return the bumpers and wheels will have been attacked.

Jerry Williams, the extension agent for Phillips County, understands kudzu. He understands every plant that grows in this part of the world. Ask Williams what he knows about cotton, rice, soybeans, winter wheat, milo, cantaloupes, peaches, plums, watermelon, or the control of broadleaf weeds, and he overflows with information.

Take cotton, for instance. Williams will tell you that it grows taller naturally than it does in the fields of the Delta. He'll tell you that these days cotton plants are purposely kept short by chemical means, to aid in the cotton harvest. "All stalky plants grow from knuckle to knuckle," he says. "And a farmer can control the length of stalk between those knuckles by applying a growth regulator called Pix, which has chemicals in it that inhibit the production of gibberellic acid, the hormone that makes the plants grow. The growth-regulated cotton probably has more bolls than the tall plants, and the bolls are concentrated in a smaller area. That way, the farmer can set his cotton picker for one height, and speed up the harvest. If you don't have any Pix around, you can also regulate cotton growth with sugar. The carbohydrates in the sugar get turned into proteins inside the cotton, and that slows the growth. But it's quite expensive to sift sugar over an entire cotton field."

The Phillips County Extension Service is on the first floor of the Phillips County Courthouse. From there, Williams, with the help of three ag agents and two office staff people, works to educate local farmers in the most efficient ways to grow crops. "We're part of the University of Arkansas, and the state maintains one of these offices in every county," Williams says. "Phillips County is one of the larger counties in Arkansas, both in area and in the amount of crops we produce. So our office keeps busy. Before we go out and inspect a field, I'm waiting to see a draft of a letter I've written to Governor Clinton. I'm asking that Phillips County become eligible for federal disaster relief. With all this rain, especially in the southern end of the county, the crops are underwater, so we're asking for some of the flood-relief money that's being released right now."

Jerry Williams is a hybrid: one part farmer and one part botany professor. He's in his mid-forties, tall and solid.



"Who produced your first marriage?"

• •

He has closely cropped hair, and wears checked shirts, Red Wing slip-on boots, and khaki trousers to the office. If you were to see him on the street, you'd think, There's a farmer. But when Williams talks he has the genteel, authoritative air of a Shakespeare professor. His office is a hybrid, too. A bronzed clump of peanuts still on their vine sits on his large desk, and the walls of the room are thick with charts tracking the idealized growth of rice and cotton and beans. There are also posters identifying different broadleaf weeds. And Williams' University of Arkansas diplomas hang on the wall behind his desk. Plant-husbandry and chemical books line long shelves around the office's lower walls. There is a computer in a corner, and a typewriter on a cart behind the desk.

"We're a clearing house for information to local farmers," Williams goes on. "Our office dispenses information on how farmers can grow their crops most efficiently. Then, when they get the plants in the ground and growing, we do field scouting. Some of the farmers hire private consultants for this kind of thing, but the state offers it free. We advise on fertilizer use, insect control, weed control, and pesticide use—and, we hope, not misuse. Then, in winter, we help to recertify farmers and aerial applicators for use of the chemicals the following year. The application of agricultural chemicals has become very closely regulated. Nowadays, everyone who uses them is certified."

Williams gets up, tidies his desk, and heads for the door. I follow. As we walk down the hall, he says, "What we're going to do now is go out and inspect a farmer's field. He called this afternoon and said that an aerial applicator had drifted some herbicide onto his bean field. He says his beans are dead, and he wants to make a claim to the State Plant Board. Before he can do that, though, I have to inspect the damage and decide if it's serious enough to warrant an investigation."

This is how plant-damage claims work: If a farmer believes that his crop has been killed by chemicals drifting onto the wrong field, Williams or his extension-service counterparts survey the extent of the damage and, if it is serious, call in the State Plant Board, a body that assesses the crop damage in monetary terms, to verify that the dead plants were killed by the poison drift. Then the board, after figuring out which field the poison drifted from and checking on which pilot recently sprayed that field, fines the pilot an appropriate damage cost.

"The Plant Board has got very good at knowing which damage is caused by drift and which isn't," Williams says. "The tough claims happen more with fish kills than with crop destruction. On catfish farms, for instance, where microorganisms or mechanical failure in the aeration can kill a bunch of catfish the same way that poison drift can, it's hard to know just how the fish died. Most plant-damage claims are easy to figure out. If the plants are dead in exact rows, then an aerial applicator didn't do it, because wind drift isn't that precise. Drifting poison kills plants unevenly, and you can usually see the difference immediately."

We go outside. When we reach Williams' navy-blue Chevrolet S-10 pickup, he opens both its doors, and we let the superheated air spill out before getting in. We drive southwest along the Mississippi River levee, along wide and blindingly sunlit streets. "We're having one of the worst years in history, in terms of trying to raise crops," Williams says. "At the experimental station up north in Lee County, we've already had fifty-three inches of rain this year, and it's only late July. We're supposed to get only forty-five inches of rain annually, and November, which is traditionally our rainy month, is still a long way off. The aerial applicators, though, are doing good business. They're spraying most of the fields this year—not just the rice. The ground around the county is too swampy for farmers to go in there with ground-based sprayers. But that's the way it is with farming. You just take it as it comes, and you try to think for the long haul. That's all you can do."

The Victorian houses of the town have given way to live-oak trees, shotgun shacks, and the flatness of Delta cropland. In the distance I can see the Mississippi River Bridge at Helena, a nearly parabolic arc that sails a mile and a half from levee to levee, hundreds of feet above the wide brown river's surface.

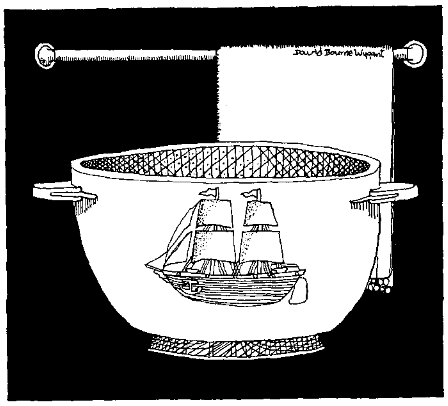
"Farming in the Delta is hard work," Williams says, turning south onto a farm road a quarter mile from the levee. "It's as complicated a job as there is. The ground is fertile, but the bugs and weeds and molds are impossible to contend with. The changing conditions through the year keep a farmer jumping. Take rice. You plant your rice in a dry field, then pass over it with fertilizer and with a chemical called propanil. That keeps the weeds down before the field is flooded. The weeds take hold so fast that farmers usually have to spray with propanil twice in the two weeks before the rice germinates and they can flood the fields. Rice has an enzyme that can break down propanil, but weeds don't. It's pretty sophisticated. Then, as the farmers flood the fields and the rice head starts growing, the aircraft come into play. The aerial applicators will fertilize the flooded fields and maybe apply herbicide a couple of times during the summer for maintenance, but, *with rice, they very seldom have to lay* out any insecticide. Once a rice field is flooded, it pretty much takes care of itself.

"With the growing and management of cotton, though, things are much more complicated. Cotton is a difficult crop even for the oldest hands at it. We have huge insect and weed problems with cotton, and the plant itself is very delicate. There are preëmergence herbicides to control grass and broadleaf weeds. There are seed treatments to protect the seed before it has germinated. Then, the instant the cotton comes up, it's attacked by insects. And that's a long battle. Insecticides are hard on the plants, and they're hard on the environment. At least seventy per cent of all insecticides used in this region are applied on cotton, and in dry years they're mostly sprayed from ground-based equipment. It's best if you spray for pests up under the cotton leaves, so most years the aircraft aren't really needed. Then, after a lot of tending, the cotton gets ready to harvest, and the ag pilots spray a defoliant on it, which makes the leaves fall off so the cotton can be harvested. It also smells up the countryside something fierce. Still, the defoliant enables a farmer to harvest a field in one pass. It's very efficient."

Williams slows the truck and turns onto a muddy two-track. "The field damage is up here," he says. To our left is a cotton field. To our right is a healthy bean field. We roll a half mile up the two-track, with the truck's front tires chucking mud past the windows. On our right, a new planting of beans begins. The rows run parallel to the muddy road, and you can see immediately that something has killed them. The rows nearest the road are brown and only two inches tall. As the rows recede, they get taller—three inches, four inches, six inches, a foot, but they are all dead and brown. Finally, about a hundred yards away from the road, beginning with a single furrow line, the plants are tall and green again. Williams stops the truck, and even before getting out he says, "The farmer killed this field. An ag flier didn't do this."

As we step out of the truck, our feet sinking two inches into the road's mud, Williams lifts his right arm and swings it, pointing across the field. "See how the dead plants are on a tilt?" he says. "See how their tops make a plane that angles down toward this side?" He walks around the front of the truck and into the field, his boots tossing off clumps of mud. He squats near a row of small, dead plants and says, "I don't know what killed these beans, but they were dead just after emergence, so it must have been something pretty strong."

A white mongrel dog appears from the cotton field behind us; it trots over to Williams, and begins jumping on him as he stands up. He pets the dog, rubbing it behind the ears and saying, "Where'd you come from?" Finally, the dog gets down and sits at Williams' feet. As Williams slaps at the muddy paw prints on his trousers, he says, "Here's what I think happened to this field. Either the farmer got some bad beans, and out there where the healthy plants start is where he refilled the planter with untainted seeds, or—and this is what I *really* think happened—he didn't wash out the planter after he'd laid out some granular herbicide with it, and the residual chemicals in that planter killed the beans. That's why the beans nearest the road, where he began planting first, died the quickest. Whatever was in the planter grew less and less potent as the planting went on. By the time he got out there into the field, the planter was clean and the plants could grow up fine."



Williams returns to the truck, opens the door, and lifts one boot at a time, banging it against the truck's frame to get the mud off before stepping into the truck. I mimic him on the passenger side. "It's strange to see a field of beans dead," Williams says, starting the engine. "Beans are pretty resilient. Now, cotton—cotton plants die all the time. But beans? Not often. Soybeans can survive almost anything."

Williams turns the truck around, then drives back toward the paved farm road. The mongrel dog trots along behind us, falling steadily back and soon vanishing from sight. "We've got a whole bunch of soybean herbicides, for instance, but with cotton *herbicides we're very limited*," Williams says. "Cotton is just so delicate. Often you'll be driving along and you'll see a bunch of people with hoes out in a cotton field. They're chopping cotton—that means they're chopping the weeds out of that field, because, for one of many reasons, the cotton is too vulnerable for herbicides. Chopping cotton is hard work. It's a lot of hoeing and stooping. It's expensive, too. A farmer has to pay at least minimum wage to his choppers, which costs a lot more than spraying it himself or paying an ag pilot to fly over it. Chopping cotton is about the hardest, hottest work that I know of. And all for minimum wage."

We pull out onto the paved road and head north along the levee. "Cotton is just one hard crop to keep up," Williams says. "As I was saying before, it requires the most pesticides, because it attracts the most bugs. And the reason we can use all those pesticides is that we don't eat it. If cotton were a crop that we ate instead of one that we wore, the E.P.A. and the F.D.A. wouldn't allow us to spray it with some of the things we use."

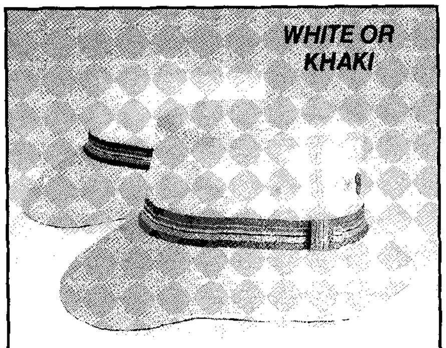
I ask Williams about the environmental consequences of using pesticides and herbicides.

"The farmer, he's a conservationist," Williams says. "He's got more at stake than anybody when it comes to making sure his land is healthy. And farmland isn't just dirt. It's all that surrounds that dirt. You need clean water. You need bird and bat and animal populations to do their bit to control pests. I'm not saying that agricultural chemicals sometimes aren't abused—they are—but those instances are rare. Chemical engineering is a very specific science these days. It's not like it was thirty years ago, when one application of DDT or calcium arsenate would destroy all the unwanted plants and insects. These days, a farmer applies specific chemicals for specific things. For instance, we go after broadleaf weeds at one time and individual bug species at another. It's all very controlled. It's more like shooting a rifle than like shooting a shotgun, which is how it was in the old days. And now the chemical suppliers take their own precautions, which they didn't use to. These days, they design their products to break down quickly, which minimizes damage to the environment if there's some sort of accident."

As Williams drops me off back in Helena, he says, "The farmer doesn't want to mess up his land. He doesn't want to mess up the environment. That's his livelihood. And I can tell you, the farmers and the ag pilots are learning to read the bottle labels on the chemicals they're planning to apply. More and more, they're concerned with the chemicals they're using. Not because the E.P.A. laws say so, which they do, but because everybody knows they'd better. When a farmer uses a six-ounce bottle of concentrated herbicide, he'd better know how it works, because that little bottle costs fifty dollars. And he'd better employ it right, because if he doesn't he'll kill his crops, and that will ultimately cost him many thousands of dollars. Farmers can't afford not to know how to use agricultural chemicals. In no small way, farmers and environmentalists are coming together. It's like a big circle, and it all works together. That's farming: what you give out is what you get back."

A SHORT HISTORY OF AGRICULTURAL AVIATION, PART 3: In the nineteen-seventies, when ag aviation was at its peak, there were as many as ten thousand planes working crops across the country. Today, roughly six thousand ag planes, owned by two thousand different operators, are left in the United States. Through a combination of increased aircraft efficiency, the growing popularity of applying liquid pesticides and herbicides from ground-based spray rigs, and the hard-bitten economics of contemporary farming, the number of crop-dusting planes—and of pilots who fly them—is thinning. Arkansas has the most ag pilots, with about five hundred and fifty. Second in number of ag fliers is Texas, where about five hundred and thirty pilots double up, tending both the cotton fields of their own state and those of southern New Mexico. Next come the four hundred and fifty crop dusters of Louisiana, and their numbers are nearly equalled by the pilot populations of Nebraska and California. But slowly the fliers are disappearing. In response to this downturn in demand, the number of domestic ag-plane manufacturers has dwindled to just four, and which aircraft a pilot or a flying service selects these days is largely a question of available cash and brand loyalty. Given a choice, every ag pilot would prefer a turbine engine to a nine-cylinder radial one. The nine-cylinder rigs (the ag-flying standard since the nineteen-thirties, when they replaced automobile-style, on-line engines) churn out between four hundred and fifty and a thousand horsepower. They also take six seconds to go from idle to full throttle, and have a dangerous tendency to quit at unexpected times. The turbines, on the other hand, smoothly deliver between five hundred and twelve hundred horsepower, can go from idle to full power in three and a half seconds, and almost never have a mechanical failure. Bruce Hayes says, "If you see a wrecked ag plane with a turbine engine, you can be 99.44 per cent sure that the crash was caused by pilot error."

All of today's ag aircraft are designed to carry only one passenger: the pilot. And the dimensions of all ag planes are about the same: they have an over-all length of about twenty-eight feet and a wingspan of about forty-six. Prices for new aircraft run from a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, for a plane with a rebuilt nine-cylinder engine, to nearly six hundred thousand dollars, for a new turbine aircraft. For safety reasons, most ag planes are painted high-visibility yellow. Lawhon's red-white-and-blue model is an ag-flying anomaly. When he saw a red-white-and-blue Turbo-thrush at the Ayers Aviation factory, his patriotic stripe emerged strongly, and he demanded that his new aircraft be painted the same way. The folks at



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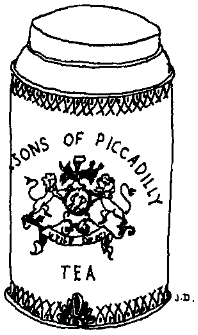
These days, the only agricultural-aircraft manufacturer making biplanes is the Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, of Elmira, New York, and the Schweizer Ag-Cat is the industry's nod to the Stearman. The reason that Schweizer still makes biplanes, forty years after most of aviation has forgotten about them, is that a marketing study found that traditionalist pilots still preferred them to the low-winged monoplanes being rolled out by most ag-plane manufacturers. The Ag-Cat was once part of Grumman's famous Cat line of aircraft, which included the Second World War fighter the Hellcat, but Grumman, wanting to get out of the commercial-aircraft business, sold it to Schweizer in the nineteen-seventies. As for the domestic monoplane manufacturers, at one time there was no shortage of them—Curtiss, Piper, Cessna, Taylorcraft, Rockwell, Funk, Waco, and Rawdon, to name a few—and they all had production ag aircraft coming off their factory lines. These days, however, the only aircraft corporations still making ag planes are Ayers (of Albany, Georgia), Air Tractor (of Olney, Texas), and Weatherly (of Lincoln, California). All their aircraft come with a variety of engine options, and all the corporations offer production-line turbine engines. This year, a total of about a hundred and fifty new ag planes will be purchased by pilots across the United States—a figure that's down about ninety per cent from the nineteen-seventies, when more than thirteen hundred new planes a year were sold. For the roughly seven thousand American ag pilots still working, this is not an encouraging statistic.



"ISN'T that article of yours done yet?" Jim Lawhon says. Lawhon is sitting on the porch of Planter's Ag as I get out of my Land Cruiser. It's my last day in the Delta, and I'm driving around saying goodbye and thank you to those who have helped with my research. Lawhon is at the end of his lunch hour; he's resting in the shade, on one of the porch benches; he's enjoying a cigarette before going back to work. He's also, I notice, sweating through his red polo shirt.

"I'm just heading back to Little Rock now," I say. "You're my last stop."

"Well, you'd better ask me your questions quick, because I'm about to go back to flying," Lawhon says. "I'm gonna spray some cotton in Mississippi this afternoon."

I tell him that I don't have any more questions.

"In that case, I'm going back to work," he says, crushing out his cigarette. "It was nice to meet you, and come back anytime."

I tell him that I'll stop by when I can, and I thank him.

Lawhon heads for his aircraft, then stops short and turns to face me. "You know, you can't really understand this job in a month," he says. "You can't really understand this job in a year. Twenty years, maybe. Thirty years, probably. But not in a month."

I say I'll do my best.

Walking backward and facing me, Lawhon says, "Well, you'd better get us right. It'll make my life plenty difficult if you don't. I mean, I'll have to drive all the way to Little Rock just to shoot you." He laughs, waves goodbye, and walks toward his aircraft. He fires up the plane and is headed down the runway in seconds. A minute later, the Turbo-thrush has turned around in the sky and is flying right at me. I think of that scene from "North by Northwest," the one where Cary Grant is being chased down and shot at by the crop-dusting plane. Lawhon, though, isn't shooting; he's just saying goodbye. He comes toward me thirty yards off the ground, dipping and wagging the aircraft's wings. As he draws near, he drops the left wing until the Turbo-thrush is almost vertical. The plane roars past, and Lawhon gives me a quick salute from inside the cockpit. He's smiling beneath his white crash helmet. Before I can lift my hand to salute back, the plane is headed for the horizon. —DONOVAN WEBSTER

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A story on the origins of the Dairy Queen franchise that appeared in the April 29 Business section gave an incorrect date for the first test explosion of an atomic bomb. The correct date is July 16, 1945.—*Chicago Tribune.*

Thanks.

MUSICAL EVENTS

Transmutations

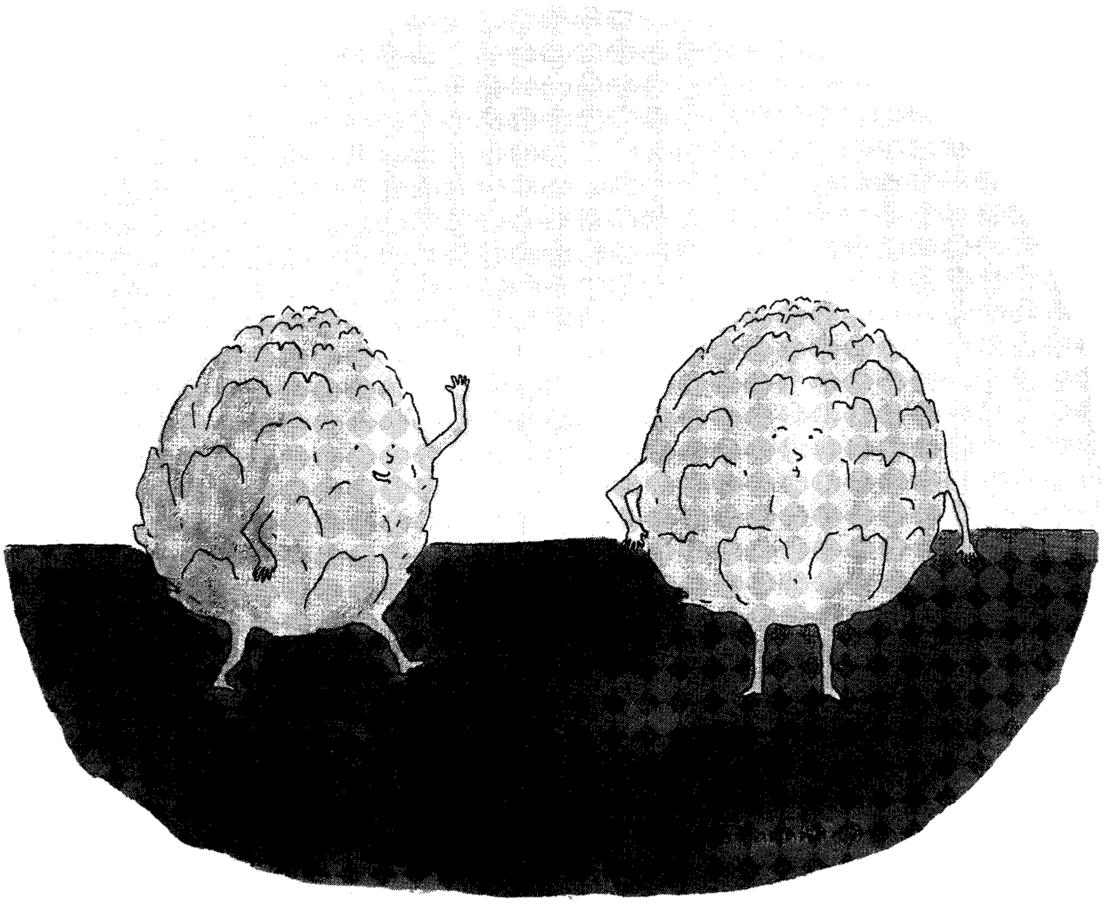
Puccini's "La Bohème" appeared in 1896, in Turin; Leoncavallo's "La Bohème" in 1897, in Venice (at the Fenice, while Puccini's version was playing at the San Benedetto). Since 1893, both composers had been at work. In that year, Leoncavallo published a letter in the *Secolo* claiming priority in choice of the subject. But Henry Murger's "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème" was in the public domain. The next day, Puccini published a reply in the *Corriere della Sera:* "Let him compose, and I will compose, and the public will judge. Precedence in art does not imply that one must interpret the same subject with the same artistic ideas." He had just made his name with a "Manon Lescaut" composed while Massenet's "Manon" (1884) was famous and still fresh, having declared in advance that whereas Massenet "felt 'Manon' like a Frenchman, with the powder and the minuets, I shall feel it as an Italian—*con passione disperata.*"

Between the two "Bohème"s the public did judge. Leoncavallo's opera had a short life, in Italy and abroad—Mahler, against his better judgment, conducted it in Vienna in 1898; Caruso sang thirteen performances in Genoa that year (and recorded two of the arias in 1911)—and then all but disappeared. Many people from time to time feel at least a mild curiosity about "the other 'Bohème,' " and on occasion it is revived. The American première was at Columbia University in 1960. There is a CD recording, with Lucia Popp as Mimì. Last month, the Opera Theatre of St. Louis presented the piece.

Leoncavallo was an ambitious and carefully educated composer, with degrees in both literature and music. His first operatic subject was "Chatterton," his next a Wagnerianly aspirant trilogy, "Crepusculum," about the Medici, Savonarola, and Cesare Borgia. Only "I Medici" was composed, and Ricordi turned it down. The composer "lost patience," he said, and dashed off "Pagliacci" in an attempt to cap Mascagni's veristic "Cavalleria Rusticana." He achieved his only lasting success. In its wake "I Medici" and "Chatterton" reached the stage, and were scorned. "Zazà" did rather better. "Edipo Re" was heard only in 1920, the year after his death; "Prometeo" remains unpublished and unperformed. Leoncavallo turned out to be even more of a one-opera composer than Mascagni.

Mahler on his appointment to the Vienna Opera, in 1897, was dispatched to Venice to see the rival "Bohème"s. He reported that Puccini's music was at once new and easy of comprehension, the orchestration "very effective," the vocal writing excellent, and the libretto both interesting and ably constructed. And continued, "However, I cannot speak in similar terms of Leoncavallo's work. The music is without originality, and poor in inspiration, in spite of all the technical refinements. The text of the first two acts is boring; the third sentimental in the worst sense of the word, and even lewd."

Leoncavallo, his own librettist, kept closer to Murger than did Puccini and his librettists, Giacosa and Illica. He preserved the sketchlike, discursive quality of the "Scènes." Musette and Marcello (mezzo and tenor) are his principal pair until, in the fourth act, Rodolfo and the dying Mimì (baritone and soprano) move center stage. The role of Schaunard (*primo baritono comico*) is as large as Rodolfo's—Leoncavallo had Victor Maurel, the first Falstaff, in mind—and Schaunard's Eufemia (*mezzo soprano comprimario*) is amusingly present for two acts. Colline (*secondo baritono*) appears only in Act I, which is set inside the Café Momus. Act II is Musette's party in the courtyard, where her furniture has been dumped in preparation for her eviction; here Mimì's new protector, the Viscount (another *secondo baritono*), persuades her to leave Rodolfo. (A slightly



"Yo, Benny, how's the ticker?"

different version of the party figured in the original plan of Puccini's opera.) Act III is set in Marcello's garret, and Act IV in Rodolfo's adjacent garret.

Puccini and his collaborators, working freely, wrote an Act II and Act III of largely their own invention and, although they termed their four parts *quadri* (pictures), not acts, shaped an effective, focussed drama, romanticizing and poeticizing the characters. Their Mimì, so touchingly introduced, is hardly the Mimì whom Murger's Rodolphe meets as the mistress of one of his friends, and appropriates. Citing Murger's description of her in their libretto, they omit the part about eyes "overcast in moments of ennui or ill humor by an expression of cruelty that was almost savage, in which a physiognomist might see the indications of profound egoism or great insensibility." Their Rodolfo, understandably enough, is not, like Murger's Rodolphe, abundantly bearded and precociously bald. Nor is Leoncavallo's Rodolfo; but in general the Leoncavallo drama holds less romance, more realism. The score is matchingly diffuse. Verdi's "Falstaff" was an influence on both "Bohème"s. In Leoncavallo's, the influence is unassimilated: Act II has a scherzo ensemble that crosses the "Falstaff" fugue with the "Otello" terzettino "Questa è una ragna." Wagner and Massenet were hot composers of the day. (Toscanini conducted the Italian première of "Götterdämmerung" and the première of Puccini's "Bohème" in the same Turin season; "Manon" reached Milan in 1893, "Werther" in 1894.) Leoncavallo's third act begins with homage motivic and harmonic to the "Tristan" prelude, but when Musette writes her letter of farewell to Marcello she falls into the periods and accents of Charlotte. To the opera historian it is all very interesting; and to any listener a spirited account of this "Bohème"—such as St. Louis provided—makes an agreeable change from the usual version.

Rhoda Levine, the director, achieved well-defined characterizations. Andrew Litton conducted; he kept the music flowing but had not persuaded the orchestra, drawn from the St. Louis Symphony, to play lightly. Charlotte Hellekant (Musette), Elisabeth Comeaux (Mimì), and Cheryl Majercik (Eufemia) gave delicate performances. Their partners—Allan Glassman (Marcello), Motti Kaston (Rodolfo), and Kenn Woodward (Schaunard)—were vocally well endowed, and lively, but were apt to sing too loud. The opera was given in a fluent new English translation, by Margaret Stearns.

THERE was no new opera at St. Louis this year. The twentieth century was represented by a production of "Ariadne auf Naxos" in which the second part—"Ariadne" proper—had been dramaturgically refashioned by the director, Nicholas Muni. The work that Hofmannsthal and Strauss first created—Molière's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" with "Ariadne" replacing the Turkish divertissement—needed both singers and actors. Soon after the première (in 1912), the poet came up with the idea of a sung prologue:

> The Composer now occupies the very center; he is a symbolic figure half tragic, half comic; the antithesis of the whole drama (Ariadne, Zerbinetta—the spiritual and the worldly) is now anchored in him; the whole has been extended, and enriched; there are slight, witty occasions for arias, so that it need not be all in *secco;* the genesis of the tune ("Du Venussohn") runs through the whole scene; there is even a hint of a little duet (Zerbinetta-Composer). . . . It is neat and round, merry and earnest. . . . The unnatural connection between the dead [Molière] and the living has been severed. . . . How crystalline and complete, how harmonious the beautiful "Ariadne" will be once it has been placed on this pedestal.

The revised "Ariadne"—the marvellous new backstage prologue, musically and psychologically so poignant and entertaining, and then the opera slightly shortened, shorn of interventions by M. Jourdain and his company—had its première in 1916 and has been delighting the world ever since. Few people—Sir Thomas Beecham and Norman Del Mar are two—have regretted that the creators did not keep faith with their original, audacious experiment. "Ariadne" was conceived independently of "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," she had proved an uneasy bedfellow, and the divorce profited both. Hofmannsthal's "Bürger als Edelmann" with Strauss's incidental music also became an independent work.

Mr. Muni saw it as his "challenge," he wrote in a program note, "to create an organic connection between the prologue and the second half (the opera)," since "the primary story line must be resolved in some way" and "in this case the primary story line is the prologue and it is left completely unresolved." So he set "Ariadne" itself backstage, too (we watched it as if from upstage), and kept the prologue characters—Composer, Music Master, Dancing Master, Major Domo—present and prominent. He sacrificed the opera to a drama of his own devising, about performers in relation to their roles, and the ways in which "opera" can transcend personal piques and practical mishaps. Hofmannsthal told Strauss that "Ariadne" is about

> one of the straightforward and stupendous problems of life: fidelity; whether to hold fast to that which is lost, to cling to it even unto death—or to live, to live on, to get over it, to transform oneself, to sacrifice the integrity of the soul and yet in this transmutation to preserve one's essence. . . . But what to divine souls is a real miracle is to the earthbound nature of Zerbinetta just an everyday love affair. She sees in Ariadne's experience the only thing she *can* see: the exchange of an old lover for a new one. And so these two spiritual worlds are in the end ironically brought together in the only way in which they can be brought together: in non-comprehension.

He no doubt wrote that last sentence ironically, trusting to the composer's lyricism and theatrical flair to compensate for non-comprehension of all that he, Hofmannsthal, had in mind.

In Mr. Muni's production, the Prima Donna (her back toward us) guyed Ariadne's first, tragic aria, "Ein Schönes war"—mopped and mowed, forgot her words, consulted a score concealed on her rock, was prompted from the wings by a frantic Composer. The audience laughed. I was tempted to leave the theatre in disgust. The three nymphs, Andrews Sisters, sang into a period microphone (a prop: in the little St. Louis theatre no amplification is needed). The audience laughed. I stayed, and gradually the production cast its own, Pirandellian spell. Other figures materialized: mysterious, idealized representations of the Circe who haunts Bacchus' muddled mind and the Hermes whom Ariadne expects; a raddled crone who represents Zerbinetta's future if she persists in her frivolous course; a vision of the romantic, Octavian-like Composer, a young Mozart, whom Strauss envisaged, as well as the plump little fusspot onstage. By the close, "transcendence" held full sway. Opera was triumphant. The final duet soared, even though it was sung by a Prima Donna who, hauled from a dressing room to which she had stomped in scorn, had flung a frowzy wrapper and mobcap over her Ariadne costume and by a stout Tenor who had shed his wig.

I ought to disapprove more than I do, but, after that first revulsion, I was held by the intelligence and imagination with which Mr. Muni had risen to his self-imposed, unnecessary challenge: by the richness and ambiguities of the staging, by the skill and beauty with which it was executed. This was a gloss—always engaging—on the opera that Hofmannsthal and Strauss composed. The relation of performers to their art is an element of "Ariadne auf Naxos." Mr. Muni worked as if for an audience reluctant to enter the deeper levels on which the "Ariadne" opera at once exemplifies and—from its start, not only at the close—goes beyond the concerns of the prologue characters.

The musical execution was good. Stephen Lord conducted. Christine Brewer was a Prima Donna and David Rampy a Tenor with a full flow of good sound. Tracy Dahl, the Zerbinetta, was animated, vocally tough, unwinning until in the aria she became fleet and sweet. Robert Orth's Harlequin was excellently clear but missed the romance and awe with which his predecessors have responded to their first hearing of opera-seria enchantment. Elizabeth Futral, Mary Ann McCormick, and Mary Margaret Sapp were a well-tuned trio of nymphs. Wright Moore, the Brighella, showed how a light tenor unpushed but word-focussed can tell.

THE St. Louis Mozart opera this year was "Mitridate"—the first American staging. Mozart wrote the piece in 1770, when he was fourteen, for Milan. For St. Louis I had made an English translation, and I wondered while I made it—seeking practicable vowels for wild flights of vocalise, resorting at times to all-purpose "ah"—whether the company would ever find five sopranos or mezzos and two tenors able to compass the extravagant vocal demands. Mozart's prima donna was Antonia Bernasconi, a German soprano who three years before had created, in Vienna, the "noble simplicity" of Gluck's Alcestis; as Aspasia—who is beloved by both Mithradates and his two sons—she had to run readily and oft to high C's. There are seven high C's in the last aria of Mithradates, a tenor. St. Louis did find most of the necessary singers—engaged five agile, fearless sopranos or mezzos in the persons of Brenda Harris (Aspasia), Alison England (Xiphares), Jungwon Park (Ismene), Kristine Jepson (Arbates), and, best of all, Patricia Spence (Pharnaces), a mezzo with fascinating colors in her flexible voice. (One visits St. Louis not only to discover opera as an important part of life but also to hear new singers. This year's galaxy was especially impressive.) The tenors—Martin Thompson in the title role, Brent Weber in the one-aria cadet role of Marzio, a Roman officer—were less pliant but not unacceptable.

The opera was more arresting onstage than I had dared to hope. Ken Cazan, its director, placed the action in modern Yemen (with strong, simple décor by Tom Hennes), and the libretto—derived from Racine—is so "generic" that there were few chronological bumps. I had provided alternatives to any specific references to Pompey, the Roman Empire, the Capitol—not without misgivings, wondering whether the update would work. (Marzio became, as it were, Marty, leading a United Nations peacekeeping force.) It did work. Mr. Cazan presented a drama of dynastic and emotional strife against a background of absolute rulers, shifting alliances, and fanatical opposition to the mighty armies of the West. Young Mozart's score came to life as more than a display of musical virtuosity.

THE fourth opera of the season was "Eugene Onegin." As I write, another new production of Tchaikovsky's opera, from the Bolshoi, is due at the Met, so let me delay a review.

—ANDREW PORTER

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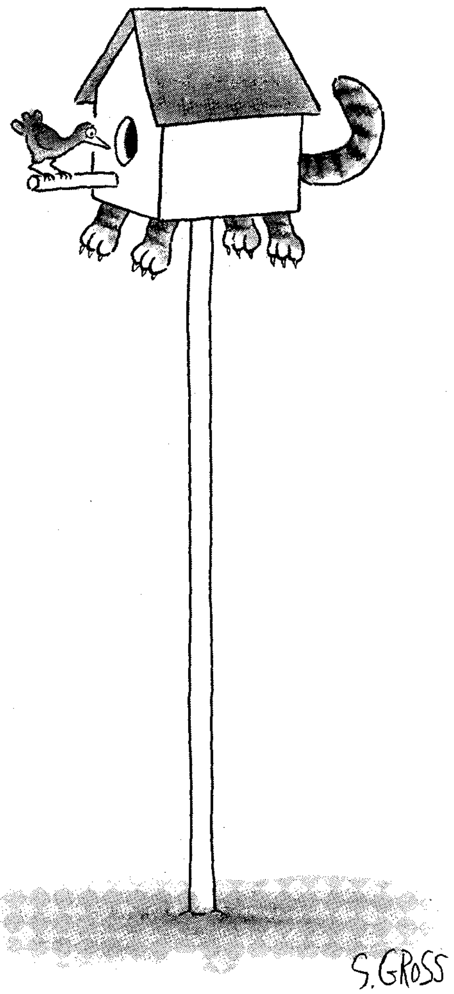
REFLECTIONS

ECONOMIC PREDICTIONS

FROM time to time, at social gatherings, I am taken aside and asked in a tone of confidentiality what I think will happen to interest rates, or to the stock market, or to the economy. I regularly answer that I haven't a clue. Because I am an economist, this response is usually interpreted as a dodge, perhaps motivated by fear that disclosure would imperil a great coup I am about to bring off. It is not that people necessarily place much confidence in what economists have to say; it is that they have a profound human need to hear utterances about the future, plausible or not. Seen from this point of view, economic predictions, like those of the ancient seers and sibyls, serve two functions. To the naïve they hold out hope that foreknowledge will enable the hearer to escape a dire fate or make a fortune. To the knowing they provide reassurance that the future is not just chance and contingency. The human psyche can tolerate a great deal of prospective misery, but it cannot bear the thought that the future is beyond all power of anticipation.

Economists are not very sanguine about the question most often put to the oracles; namely, the future of the stock market. The profession has devoted a good deal of effort to investigating the ways in which speculative markets work, and has concluded that they cannot be accurately forecast. In a market formed by the interaction of many deeply concerned individuals, the existing level of prices represents a collective judgment that incorporates more information—including, above all, expectations about the future—than any single person can hope to possess. The idea that the market "knows" more about the future than you or I could ever know is called the efficient-market hypothesis. Taken to its extreme, the hypothesis means that we can do no better than consign our fortunes to throws of the dice. Burton Malkiel, whose skeptical analysis of prediction, "A Random Walk Down Wall Street," contains in its title the adjective the Street most dislikes, has written that "a blindfolded monkey throwing darts at a newspaper's financial pages could select a portfolio that would do just as well as one carefully selected by the experts." Of course, one can beat the hypothesis if one is an insider, privy to high-impact information, such as whether a company is about to raise or cut its dividends, but inside trading is against the law, as a number of such operators have discovered recently.

Even if the efficient-market hypothesis is set aside, it is not difficult to understand why dramatic changes in volatile markets, such as those for securities or commodities, persistently elude the grasp of any predictor. The economist, like the meteorologist, has weather balloons, in the form of reports of financial transactions in markets around the world and the latest news on satellite networks, as well as his private judgment, which is the equivalent of the meteorologist's stepping outside to squint at the clouds. But collecting a mass of data is one thing, and using it to predict an outcome is another. Again like the meteorologist, the economist can never know everything, and even if he did he would likely be unable to integrate such an immense amount of material into a coherent model. Furthermore, predicting stock-market prices involves something even more elusive than calculating what the "right" price of a security should be. The right price, after all, depends primarily on what other people, not just you yourself, think that price should be, so market forecasting inevitably involves mass psychology at least as much as it involves economic expertise. John Maynard Keynes, himself an investor and foreign-exchange trader of no mean capabilities, was convinced that successful trading was largely a matter of gauging opinion rather than actuality. "Professional investment," he wrote in 1936, "may be likened to those newspaper competitions in which the competitors have to pick out the six prettiest faces from a hundred photographs, the prize being awarded to the competitor whose choice most nearly corresponds to the average preferences of the competitors as a whole; so that each competitor has to pick, not those faces which he himself finds prettiest, but those which he thinks likeliest to catch the fancy of the other competitors, all of whom are looking at the problem from the same point of view."



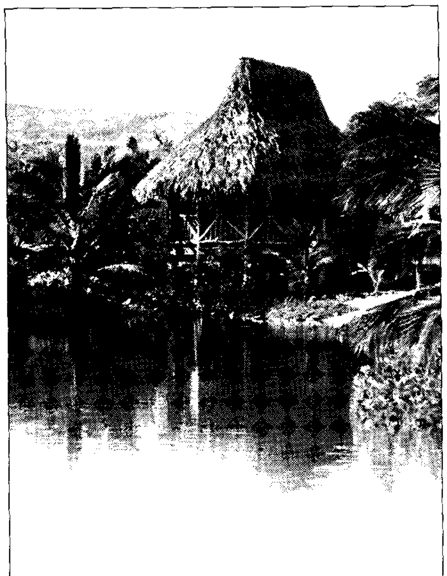
NOT all forecasting is concerned with volatile markets, such as those for stocks and bonds or foreign exchange. Economic prediction comes into its own when it turns away from the financial or commodities markets to the "real" economy, where it concerns itself with future movements of the slower-moving processes of production and distribution. As any businessman will testify, changes in outlook can affect the movements of the real economy just as decisively as they can affect the prices of securities, though not so quickly. Stock-market prices can reverse course overnight, but outputs of automobiles or textiles cannot run backward. Herbert Stein, the chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers under Richard Nixon, once said that the economy performs because a hundred million people get up in the morning and go to work. I do not know of a better explanation of the real economy, or one that makes more evident why its trajectory can be studied in a fashion denied to the forecaster of the Dow Jones averages.

At the base of this predictive potential is the assumption that human beings, in the pursuit of their economic interests, obey "laws" of behavior which establish order in the social world, much as natural laws establish it in the natural world. Adam Smith described the most important of these laws as "the desire of bettering our condition"—a desire that, he went on to say, "comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave." Smith believed that "in the whole interval which separates those two moments, there is scarce perhaps a single instant in which any man is so perfectly and completely satisfied with his situation, as to be without any wish of alteration or improvement of any kind."

Modern-day economists have elaborated on, refined, and renamed Smith's principle—it is today called the principle of utility maximization—but they have not expressed the idea any better. In fact, they have said it worse, because we cannot put to use so vague a statement as that "we maximize our utilities" if we can be said to be maximizing them whether we behave as misers or as spendthrifts, as self-aggrandizers or as altruists. Smith got around this problem by declaring, further, that the means by which most people sought to better their condition was "an augmentation of fortune"—a means he called "the most vulgar and the most obvious." Thus, to Adam Smith a widespread acquisitive propensity introduced regularity into the workings of the economy. Contemporary economics makes use of a few other seemingly universal human traits, some of them also perceived by Smith, such as a preference for present material enjoyments over future ones (which is why we won't lend a dollar today, even without risk, unless we can expect to get back more than a dollar tomorrow) and the assumption that we act "rationally" in pursuing our utility-maximizing ends.

Such generalizations—some derived from introspection, some from shared experience—underlie the social counterpart of the laws that hold the material universe together. They describe the forces that give impetus and coherence to human behavior, as the existence of a magnetic field gives impetus and coherence to the "behavior" of iron filings that fall within its ambit. The quotation marks call attention to a crucial difference between the two explanatory schemes: iron filings do not entertain ideas about their fate which can influence the way they will "obey" the pull of magnetism, whereas people, in the course of maximizing their utilities, may behave in any number of ways, depending on their frame of mind. In addition to the pull of acquisitiveness, economics gives a central role to elements that impose specific constraints on the way we respond to that pull. Laws and institutions, for example, establish limits on and channels for money-making; physical and organizational realities fix the most profitable size of business firms; and, most important of all, competition brings order out of acquisitiveness by pitting buyers against buyers, and sellers against sellers.

Thus, some degree of predictability, based on the underlying orderliness of behavior, necessarily inheres in every functioning market economy, although it is not always easy to find it. Each year, the Center for International Business Cycle Research, at Columbia University's Graduate School of Business, awards a plaque to the individual or organization whose predictions of growth, inflation, and unemployment most closely anticipate the findings of the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics and of the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis. To enter the contest, individuals and organizations must participate in monthly surveys conducted by a forecasting newsletter, *Blue Chip Economic Indicators*, and their forecasts must be made fifteen months before the target date over a period of three consecutive years. From 1981 to 1990, the best of the forecasts came within a third of a percentage point of



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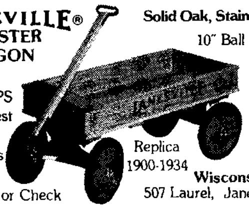

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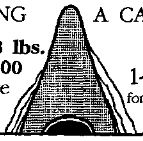

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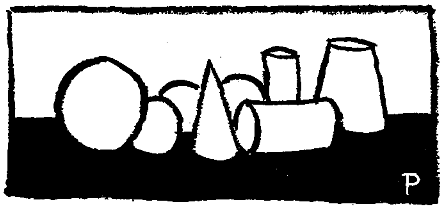
the official data, and the average of all winners' forecasts over the decade was within one percentage point. Further evidence of the economy's predictability comes from the newsletter itself, which is published in Sedona, Arizona. Its editor, Robert J. Eggert, interviews some fifty well-known economists each month, averages their predictions, and later compares the consensus result with the official data. Over the years from 1977 to 1986, the consensus for average economic growth was only one percentage point away from the official figures, and in four of the ten years it was off by less than half of one percentage point. A scholarly study for the National Bureau of Economic Research by Victor Zarnowitz, a leading expert on forecasting, arrives at a roughly similar appraisal of government and other private forecasts.

That sounds like nearly perfect aim. But one percentage point is not at all the same as one per cent. During the years in question, for instance, the gross national product grew at an average rate of about 2.5 per cent a year. A forecast of 3.5 per cent—or, for that matter, of 1.5 per cent—would be only one percentage point away from the actual growth rate but would be an error in prediction of forty per cent. Forecasts for the rate of inflation were off by slightly more than estimates for the G.N.P. Unlike the growth figures, however, which were consistently overpredicted, the rates at which prices rose were consistently underpredicted. Writing in *Challenge*, a widely read journal of economic affairs, James Eggert, the son of the editor of *Blue Chip Economic Indicators*, bestows the friendly grade of B-plus on the *Blue Chip* forecasters' estimates for the yearly G.N.P. but gives their estimates on inflation only a C. The latter predictions miss the mark, he believes, because forecasters have been clinging to a "collective *disbelief*" that inflation could move as rapidly as it does. Eggert has the following advice for them:

> Inflation rate up?
> Add one percent
> For forecasting fame.
> Inflation rate down?
> Subtract the same!

Although the economy lends itself to much more accurate forecasting than the stock market, "real" forecasting, like its financial sibling, is always least reliable when we need it most—that is, when the system is changing its course. In the *Blue Chip* results, for example, the single worst year was 1982, when the consensus foresaw a continuation of growth of 2.2 per cent, whereas in fact we headed into a sharp recession, which lowered the G.N.P. by 2.5 per cent. The consensus could hardly have been more wrong. Nonetheless, it is necessary to put such errors in perspective. The economy may decline in the face of forecasts that it will rise, but the forecasting error is not likely to mean that the world has turned upside down, as may be the case when political predictions miss the mark. Recessions may last longer than expected, but failure to predict them is not likely to mean that the whole system has lost its orderly properties. At least in normal times—and economic life, for all its endless disappointments, is normal most of the time—a framework of dependable behavior imparts a predictability to the economy which has no parallel in political or social life. Economics is not, to be sure, the only source of dependability. There are important guides to the future incorporated in statements like Lord Acton's dictum that "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely," or in Freud's resigned broodings over the inescapable human condition, or in the bitter maxim of the epigrammatist Alphonse Karr that "*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*," but all these prophetic announcements have a static, timeless quality. Only economics has the audacity to portray the future as a dynamic process about which one can make statements that resemble those made by natural scientists. At the time of the French Revolution, when the conception of a lawlike social universe was making its first appearance, the Abbé Mably, a minor philosophe, is said to have wondered, "Is Society, then, a branch of Physics?" The answer is that it is not, of course, but if society did not bear some loose resemblance to physics the complex system of capitalism, with its energies dispersed among uncountable numbers of firms and individuals, would have long since broken down disastrously, just as the solar system would break down if momentum and gravity ceased to exist.



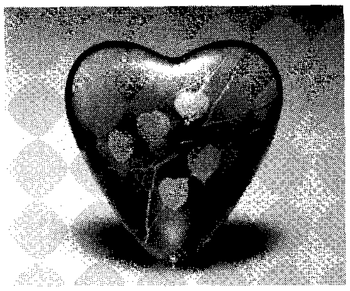
THE great economists of the past were intensely interested in this physicslike aspect of the economic system as a whole, picturing it in scenarios that projected its development a generation or more into the future. Yet the conception that emerged from most of the economists' imaginations was not so much that of a scientific model as that of a social drama, taking place in the context of the rise and fall of social classes within a market society and, at a greater distance, of that society itself. I doubt whether more than a handful of the hundreds of millions of people who have worried about "the future" since the days of Adam Smith have ever heard of, much less read, the economic spokesmen of their times, but I suspect that their worries ultimately derived from these scenarios as they passed into the conventional wisdom. Lord Keynes, the author of an immensely influential scenario of his own, described this pervasive presence in these much quoted words:

> The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back. I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas.

In Keynes' day, scenarios spoke to a world suffering through the Great Depression, so we read Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations" and Karl Marx's "Capital" and Keynes' "The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money" to discover where we were headed at a moment when the destination appeared likely to be some form of socialism. The absence today of a plausible socialist alternative to capitalism does not vitiate the importance of the question that those scenarios sought to answer; the range of answers has simply narrowed down. Above all, the disappearance of central planning comes as a welcome rather than a regrettable constriction of possible destinations, and the lack of any attractive model of non-centrally planned socialism merely removes from our imaginations some destinations that are in fact not imaginable. Unhappily, modern economics does not offer much help to anyone interested in studying what is left. Someone who picked up *The American Economic Review*, the flagship journal of the American Economic Association, might be pardoned for thinking he was perusing a journal mathematics. The explorations of the profession today are much more likely to be directed at an imagined state of "general equilibrium," whose frozen perfection can be dissected in the manner of a Scholastic examination of the properties of Heaven, than at a trajectory of the actual economy into our children's time. At most, economists explore gamelike situations. For instance, there is the dilemma of two prisoners who both know they will get stiff sentences if each squeals on the other, moderate sentences if each remains silent, and short sentences if one squeals while his confederate does not. What would a rational prisoner do? The most recent addition to the highly respected publications of the American Economic Association is the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, which, despite its bold name, has regarded such puzzles and anomalies as important enough to warrant a special section in its pages but has yet to venture a look into the prospects for capitalism or socialism. As a result, thinking about the future of the system with which our own futures are inextricably tied up leaves us with no alternative but to turn to the master economists of the past, who, as it happens, have a great deal to say, starting with one of the most widely referred to and most rarely read: Adam Smith.

One of the pleasures of reading Smith, especially with an eye to his relevance to the future, is that he continually confounds his stereotyped image. Smith is often regarded by those who have never read "The Wealth of Nations" as a hopeless conservative, who would have been entirely at home in the uncritically pro-business atmosphere of the Reagan Administration. The junior lieutenants of that Administration, who liked to wear neckties with Smith's profile on them, would have been disconcerted to read in "The Wealth of Nations" that in its author's opinion the interest of those who live by profit "is never exactly the same with that of the public," and that they "have generally an interest to deceive and even to oppress the public, and . . . accordingly have, upon many occasions, both deceived and oppressed it." This is Smith the moralist speaking, not Smith the economist. The necktie wearers would have been more gratified by the two great predictive models in "The Wealth." One of them describes at some length how an acquisition-driven, competition-constrained system continuously adapts its production to the changing wants of the market, as labor and resources move from uses in which they have failed to yield a satisfactory return to uses in which they do yield one—the same process also giving rise to the competitive pressures that keep prices at or near costs of production. When "The Wealth of Nations" was published, in the first year of the American Revolution, this was a genuine social discovery; no one had then perceived that the workings of a free market, quite without government interference—indeed, because of its very absence—would both guide production and prevent price extortion.

Smith's insight has become part of the catechism of economics, but its real-life importance has been rediscovered only in recent years, as we have witnessed the collapse of economic systems without market networks. A complex economy appears to require a market mechanism if it is to adapt its flows of production to constantly changing demands. Such a mechanism, to be energized, requires a widespread acquisitive orientation, and the requisite acquisitiveness, in turn, will not be forthcoming in the absence of some form of legitimatized private property. These generalizations, which we owe to Smith, are about as close to a blueprint for the construction of a workable industrial system as any I know, and, as such, constitute something very much like a prediction of which economic arrangements will work for a high-powered system and which will not. Clearly, they are at the base of the sanguine expectations for capitalism in our day. They are not "scientific" predictions, in the sense of relying on laws of behavior as immutable as the law of gravity. Perhaps some propen-



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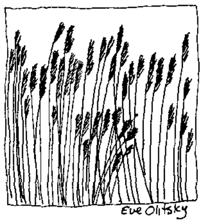
sity other than the desire for an augmentation of fortune will arise one day to give regularity to the way we interact, or some substitute for private property will instill in us the kinds of price-sensitive behavior on which a capitalist system depends. Today, however, Smith's blueprint is the basic model that is being pursued by the former centrally planned systems, all of which have come to recognize the need for the legitimatization of activities and institutions—profit seeking and property—that were anathema only a few years ago.



SMITH's equally major, and equally original, insight in "The Wealth of Nations" was that a market system would give rise to a powerful drive toward economic expansion. The very idea of economic growth as the natural outcome of any kind of socio-economic system was totally absent from the discourse of the eighteenth century, just as was the idea of a self-ordering market system. Smith based his discovery on the conception of individuals' savings as "funds" from which wages were paid to workmen who produced goods to be sold on the market, thereby augmenting the fortune of the saver. Growth was thus the result of the steady accumulation of capital—a process that, nearly a hundred years after "The Wealth" was published, would finally designate such an economic system as "capitalism." In the first chapter of his great book Smith describes how capital invested in the machinery of a ten-person pin "manufactory" was able to raise the daily output of its work force from the tiny number of pins that could have been produced without the aid of machinery—perhaps only one pin per person, Smith says—to forty-eight hundred pins per person. There is nothing specifically capitalist in the division and mechanization of labor, which exerts its tremendous leverage on productivity: pinmaking machinery can be installed anywhere. The crucial element lies in the pressures that bear on the factory's owner. A capitalist system awards to capital any profits that the operation enjoys, and likewise levies against capital any losses that the operation may sustain. This arrangement introduces a degree of concern for the efficient use of capital, and it is the absence of such concern that has been one of the curses of state ownership—and, to a lesser degree, of corporate capitalism, in which managers act sometimes like surrogate owners and sometimes like inside thieves. What is of no less importance is the fact that in a competitive system profits arise largely from what Smith describes as an expansion of the market—which is to say, from economic growth. Thus, the private interest of the capitalist and the larger interest of the public become entwined, despite the deceptive and oppressive designs of the capitalist. This is one of several ways in which the famous "invisible hand" exerts its benign guidance over a market system. Each individual is motivated only to direct his enterprise into whatever channel will yield him the greatest private return, but in doing so, Smith says, he is "led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention." The end is the enhancement of the objective that Smith made the title of his book: the wealth of nations.

I daresay that no aspect of Smith's scenario has received more praise and more scorn than his assertion of the ultimate compatibility—more than that, the inescapable congruity—of private profit seeking and public benefit. The most extravagant papal dispensations pale into insignificance compared with the blanket pardon accorded to the workings of the market, whose every outcome has been, at one time or another, justified as the product of the invisible hand. Nowadays, even the staunchest supporters of Smith's vision agree that the effects of private economic effort are not always in the public interest. Economists speak of "bads" that emerge along with "goods" from any system of output, such as the smoke that accompanies a flow of production. The difference between bads and goods lies in the failure of market systems to count the full costs of producing things, such as the higher health or laundry costs imposed on those who live in the vicinity of the smoking factory. Thus, the system's heralded efficiency is in part the consequence of fobbing off the cost of bads onto the hapless public, instead of billing the guilty producer for them. Needless to say, such "negative externalities," as the economist calls them, can also arise under a centrally planned system—the ravaged landscapes of East Europe, for example—but then central planning never claimed that it would give us the blessing of an invisible hand.

Critics of capitalism have sometimes described the whole system as one gigantic negative externality, in which the achievement of a high level of profitable growth is obtained only at the cost of an even higher, but unnoted, level of public damage. Of all unlikely sources, Smith himself can be used to support such an allegation. As we have seen, he attributes the vast multiplication of output to the effects of the division and mechanization of labor. But there are other, much uglier effects stemming from the production process:

> The understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations . . . generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. The torpor of his mind renders him, not only incapable of relishing or bearing a part in any rational conversation, but of conceiving any generous, noble, or tender sentiment, and consequently of forming any just judgment concerning many even of the ordinary duties of private life. . . . His dexterity at his own particular trade seems, in this manner, to be acquired at the expence of his intellectual, social, and martial virtues. But in every improved and civilized society this is the state into which the labouring poor, that is, the great body of the people, must necessarily fall, unless government takes some pains to prevent it.

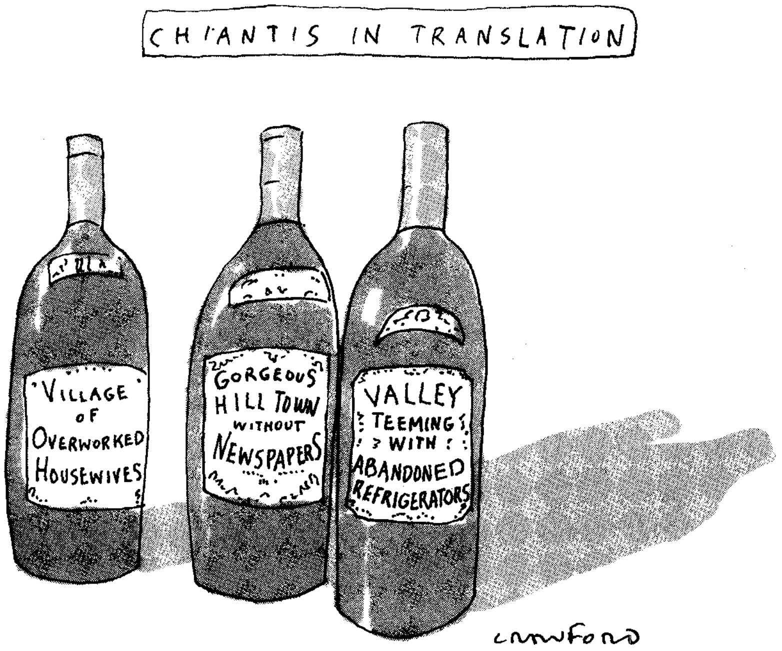
IT is dismaying to learn that Smith thought the price of material progress was moral decay, but even more dismaying to find that he expected growth to come to a stop. Once a nation had accumulated the "full complement of riches" to which its resources, geographical placement, and laws and institutions entitled it, Smith saw capital accumulation coming to an end, there being no more need for it. Thereafter, competition would lower both wages and profits to a bare minimum. I rather imagine that he put this condition of completion as far in the future as we put the day when we may finally run up against an impassable environmental barrier. Nonetheless, in a naïve way he anticipated a problem that has ever since loomed as the greatest single obstacle to long-run expansion—the problem of saturated markets, or simply running out of room for further capital accumulation. In a charming essay, "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren," written in 1930, Keynes envisaged a modern-day version of a Smithian economy. In a mere hundred years, he thought, ordinary economic growth could saturate the need for goods of all kinds. That moment of completion does not seem imminent, and the prediction hardly ranks as one of Keynes' most piercing insights. It does, however, make clear that the crucial element in all saturation scenarios is the degree to which capital accumulation assumes an unchanging array of goods. Smith failed to see that his curious projection of growth followed by decline depended on an economy in which growth meant only the multiplication of pin factories, not a continuous transformation of the processes and products of society, much as Keynes' fantasy of a completely saturated economy within a few generations revealed a blindness to technology's role in reopening the future.

One does not ordinarily place Smith and Keynes on the same side of the economic table, because, for all their common assumptions concerning the nature of the growth process, they had radically different perceptions of capitalism's future. Smith, like many eighteenth-century thinkers, was resigned to the idea of a life span for all societies: elsewhere in "The Wealth" he says that two hundred years is the longest any prosperous society is likely to endure. Keynes was more in the modern mold. He did not expect, or want, capitalism to give way to socialism, but he shared Smith's expectations of capitalism's poor material prospects. Keynes' remedy was to supplement the waning energies of private capital accumulation with a permanent public investment program. In "The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money" he wrote, "I conceive . . . that a somewhat comprehensive socialisation of investment will prove the only means of securing an approximation to full employment." Smith would have been horrified at such a proposal. One of his main objectives in writing "The Wealth of Nations" was to discredit government spending, as a source of inefficiency and waste. "Kings and ministers are . . . themselves always, and without any exceptions, the greatest spendthrifts in the society," he wrote.

Not surprisingly, Smith's shade continues to be invoked in the ongoing debate between those who favor government spending and those who oppose it—the supply-siders—but I sense that the issue is moving beyond the boundaries of his scenario, and, for that matter, of Keynes'. The change involves the increasing recognition that what matters is the use, not the mere size, of the public sector. The Keynesian idea of supplementing private spending with public spending is now universally practiced by capitalist governments, so arguments against it sound more pietistic than serious. The difference between the most "socialistic" capitalisms of Europe and the Dickensian capitalism of the United States is that between nations whose governments spend from fifty to sixty per cent of their gross national products and a nation whose government spends less than forty per cent of its. This is not a range large enough to produce radically differing outcomes for the countries concerned.

To turn the matter around, the size of the flow of public expenditure in the United States is sufficiently large and strategic to give rise here to two problems much like those which exist in Sweden. One of the problems is the inflationary pressure that has appeared in all modern capitalisms. The other is the challenge of directing the flow of public expenditure constructively and imaginatively, rather than wastefully and unproductively. All capitalisms today pump out enough government spending to prevent recessions from developing into system-threatening depressions, but they do not thereby purchase for themselves roughly equal protection against social decay or roughly equal stimulus for future growth. The United States is falling behind Europe not because it is devoting a smaller percentage of its G.N.P. to public purposes but because it is devoting that percentage to the wrong public purposes: defense expenditure accounts for more than twice as large a fraction of the G.N.P. in this country as of the G.N.P.s in the eight largest economies of the European Community. From 1965 to 1985, the United States' additions to its infrastructure amounted to less than one per cent of its G.N.P., while those of Japan came to five per cent. Nothing has changed for the better since. These were not problems that Keynes considered sufficiently important to include in his prospects for the future, but Smith once again confounds his image by ranking the provision of public works and, especially, of education at the same level of importance for government as the provision of defense and of justice.

I HAVE left to the last the scenario of greatest relevance for the future of capitalism: the scenario of Karl Marx. One tends to think of Marx as the architect of socialism, but in fact he wrote hardly more than a few pages about it, and they were largely hortatory, romantic, and unrealistic. As was true of both Smith and Keynes, the object of his economic analysis was to lay bare the dynamics of the existing socioeconomic order, which was generally not called capitalism even in his time. (Marx himself never used the word in any of his published works.) His scenario—again, like Smith's and Keynes'—is based on the consequences of the drive to accumulate capital, and on the manner in which capitalism is propelled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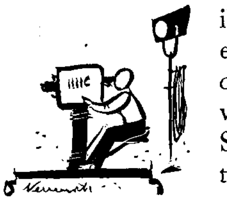
into the future by its self-generated dynamics. It is this last common interest which enables us to see that what separates economists is less fundamental than what connects them. Looking for the causes of Rome's decline and fall, Gibbon traces them to a violent collision with barbarism and the slow corrosion of religion. By contrast, looking for the causes of capitalism's likely fate, Smith, Marx, and Keynes turn to the mundane activities of the business world, the give-and-take of markets—the regularities, not the excrescences, of daily life.

It seems difficult to explain how a common perception of the economic core of social change can lead Smith and Marx to such dissimilar expectations for the future. The answer lies partly in their differing conceptions of the process of capital accumulation itself. Smith sees it as the gradual enlargement of the market for pins, enabling more—and, no doubt, somewhat larger—manufactories to accommodate the growing demand for pins. Such a view of growth suggests a self-sustaining process, governed by growing demand and growing supply. In Marx's conception, the process of competition becomes less of a moderate, and moderating, rivalry among equals and more of a struggle *à outrance*, as pin factories become wire mills, and wire mills become parts of steel combines. At the same time, and for the same reason, growth loses its smooth character, and takes the form of lurches and retreats. Thus, the orderliness characteristic of Smith's expanding market system gives way to more and more disruptive mismatches of supply and demand. In the end, the normal adjustments of the marketplace cannot handle the growing disorder. It is not possible for firms to make room for one another, or to seek greener pastures next door. First individual bankruptcies, then marketwide breakdown, then systemic "collapse" occurs, ushering out capitalism and ushering in socialism. With the sequence reversed, I picture that final climax as much like the disaster that has overcome the centrally planned systems in our day.



Along with collapse comes revolution. Here it is interesting to compare the role played by Smith's workmen with that of Marx's proletarians. For Smith, "the labouring poor," benumbed by their experience, suffer passively the fate that overtakes them when the system begins to run down; for Marx, the working class, "disciplined, united, organized" by the selfsame rigors, shakes off its traditional role of subordination and takes matters into its own hands. What is striking here is that neither scenarist gives any explanation of why the working class reacts to its experience as it does. Rather, each reaches conclusions that seem to have been present in his original sense of the limits and boundaries of historical change, or the deepest propensities of human nature. Thus, the "knell of capitalist private property sounds," and "the expropriators are expropriated," in the penultimate chapter of Volume I of "Capital" only because Marx has decreed the working class to be capable of actions from which every eighteenth-century philosophe would have recoiled.

Marx's revolutionary finale has an ironic ring these days, as it calls to mind the Götterdämmerung not of the capitalist but of the Communist world. I note this not to score an easy point off Marx but, rather, to stress the fact that economic prognostications are mixtures of sciencelike analysis and visionary conceptions—sciencelike insofar as economists see the future as determined by regularities of behavior, visionary insofar as crucial elements in any grand design are more likely to embody preconceptions than unchallengeable observations. In our day, the temper of the working class is not the decisive issue that it was in either Smith's or Marx's, but equally critical issues concern the flexibility of capitalists and the effectiveness and intelligence of government. As with the divergence of views between Smith and Marx, however, these all-important determinations are as likely to reflect the prejudices with which we begin as they are to reflect knowledge hard won from experience. This is the case not only in the scenarios we all construct for ourselves but also in those which economists construct for others. A few years ago, a young economist, Arjo Klamer, won considerable attention for his book "Conversations with Economists," in which he adroitly probed the views of some of the leading members of the profession. Speaking with Robert E. Lucas, Jr., a very well-known conservative theorist, Klamer asked, "Doesn't government try to resolve social injustice?" Lucas answered:

> That wouldn't be anything like my view. I can't think of explaining the pharaohs as being in existence to resolve social injustice in Egypt. I think they perpetrated most of the injustice in Egypt.

What is germane here is not the objective accuracy of Lucas's characterization of Pharaonic Egypt but the subjective element in his choice of Egypt to prove his point. Someone arguing the view that governments did indeed seek to resolve social injustice would no doubt have chosen Lincolnian America to make his case. Thus, at key moments in our scenarios we introduce judgments that reflect the half-unconscious ideas we hold about such charged terms as government, labor, and capital. And these ideas, in turn, reflect still deeper-buried convictions about such things as humanity's hunger for power or order, for reason or unreason, for freedom or security. Such convictions inescapably pervade all privately held or publicly reasoned estimates of the future, but here the domain of the economist yields to that of Lord Acton, Alphonse Karr, and Freud.

BECAUSE of Marx's stunning error in expecting the breakdown of capitalism, his scenario is widely dismissed today. It would be a great mistake to go along with this appraisal. Marx's analysis of the tension-ridden, irregular course of capitalist growth is a prediction as powerful and as durable as Smith's grasp of the self-regulating and growth-producing tendencies of a market system. Marx's apocalyptic finale may have turned out to be wishful thinking, but his depiction of a capitalist system as ceaselessly generating new difficulties in the course of overcoming old ones has not. Marx lived to see that dialectical process manifest itself in many aspects of the system—in the enlargement of the scale of business enterprise from the competition of firm against firm, in the destruction of old markets by the invention of new ones, in the displacement of labor by the same machinery whose construction gave rise to its employment, and in the development of world-encircling capitalism from its difficulties on a national scale. All this throws light on many developments of our own day. After we read Marx, we are less likely to blame "bureaucrats" or "unions," or even "corporations," for problems whose root cause lies, more often than not, in the powerful expansive thrust of capitalism itself. For those intrepid enough to read its nearly three thousand pages, "Capital" teaches the chastening lesson that many of us learned in condensed form from Pogo: We have met the enemy and he is us.

There is, however, one aspect of Marx's thought in which his transformational awareness is limited. This concerns the relation of the economic system to its political matrix, the state. In "The Communist Manifesto," published twenty years before the first volume of "Capital," Marx and his co-worker Friedrich Engels wrote, "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." The trouble with this formulation is that the state, like the institutions of the economy, has undergone far-reaching transformations of its own, of which the most important has been its steady accretion of responsibilities for the functioning of the nation. As a result, Keynes' "General Theory of Employment" has become a script to be substituted for Marx's failed last act. The dramatic pages that speak of the end of capitalism are ripped out of "Capital" to be replaced by an abstract and rather technical text that explains why an enlarged permanent public sector will have to be grafted onto the body of an otherwise stagnating capitalism. One can think of the Keynesian scenario as marking the transition to a new view of capitalist possibilities. Smith's vista, with its brilliance and its naïveté, was ultimately concerned with the possibilities and prospects for a still preindustrial capitalism, working out its own fate, with government making little or no direct effort to intervene in the central dynamism of the expansion process. Indeed, as Smith saw it, the dynamism would not continue if government intruded heavily into the society's freedom of contract and maneuver. In Marx's scenario we trace the much more involved ramifications of a capitalism in which transformational tendencies dominate the scene. The dynamism of the system grows beyond Smith's imagination, but so do its self-destructive strains and stresses. Capitalism comes to resemble a vast machine, shaking and trembling as its motor runs ever faster.

To Marx it seemed impossible that political and social forces could effectively manage and constrain that machine, since its government watchmen were themselves as eager as the machine's owners to increase its speed and power. Keynes' scenario begins with the assumption that we have a clearer understanding of how the mechanism can be maintained in reasonably good working order. By government spending, or by use of the government's monetary powers, Keynesians believe, it may be possible to salvage Smith's vision of growth without Marx's expectation of self-destructive expansion. This is not a utopian view, but we do not know whether it is a realistic one. Certainly, one of the most important social questions of our age is whether that Keynesian belief can be translated into the political programs and institutional adaptations that different national capitalisms would require. There seems little doubt that we have moved to a stage of capitalism at which such programs or adaptations will play a far more important role in determining the trajectory of the system than they played in the past.

What remains unanswered is two questions posed by the economists whose work still dominates our future. Can political and social forces wrench themselves sufficiently free of the imperative of economic expansion to keep this vital and vulnerable system from shaking itself to death? And, if so, must the great body of its people become "as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become"—if not from the rigors of its manufacturing process, then from the tortures of its commercial atmosphere? These are matters that are inextricably entangled in all economic predictions, which is to say only that economic predictions are inextricably entangled in political and social ones. That has always been the case, but never before to such a degree. The same people who take me aside to ask what I think of the stock market often also ask me, somewhat nervously, whether economics is really a science. What they mean is whether it can look to the future with the farseeing eyes of the astronomer. I tell them it is half science and half morality tale, and that the hope of attaining whatever goals we seek will depend at least as much on economists' thinking like moralists as predicting like scientists.

—ROBERT HEILBRONER

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THE THEATRE

In-Laws

TERRENCE MCNALLY'S "Lips Together, Teeth Apart," at the Manhattan Theatre Club, is set on the deck of a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend. Its four characters are two married couples—Sam and Sally Truman, and John and Chloe Haddock. (Sam and Chloe are brother and sister.) The play is a brilliant comedy about—if plays can be about abstract nouns—death: past, present, and to come. And, as was true of the indelible first act of Mr. McNally's "Lisbon Traviata," beneath the laughter, which is practically continuous, feelings are strong and on the boil, occasionally boiling over.

In John Lee Beatty's spacious, beautiful setting, with the edge of a swimming pool downstage, the play opens to the sound of an opera recording from offstage left. John (Anthony Heald) is reading a newspaper, Sally (Swoosie Kurtz) is sitting at an easel facing the sea and painting, Sam (Nathan Lane) is drinking coffee by the pool, and Chloe (Christine Baranski) is wandering in and out with a tray of food and drinks and a spate of chatter about, among other things, "the boys from Ipanema next door." Sally has been watching a swimmer too far out, who has been waving (compliments of Stevie Smith, perhaps) and has now disappeared. In a soliloquy, straight to the audience, she says that she is pregnant and that she is frightened. John, also in soliloquy (that Eugene O'Neill kind of aside), tells us that he has inoperable cancer. We learn that John and Sally have had one brief sexual episode and have fallen in love. We also learn that the house belonged to Sally's brother, who died recently. Sam goes under the house and, in a fit of merriment, brings up a dead snake to frighten the ladies. We're off.

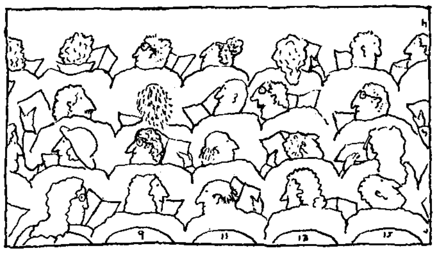
No modern dramatist I can think of writes better parts than Terrence McNally, and in this case he has had the luck to have all four of them performed with style and skill. The play is a matter of episodes and feelings. AIDS is very much in the air. John, bored with his talky wife and her non-stop routines (song and dance) from old musicals, forbids her to speak for six hours. Sam takes sudden offense on behalf of his sister, and a fight starts, leaving him with an almost broken arm. Sally's fury is icy. She and John are the quiet ones, the private ones: Sally is grieving for her brother and is annoyed by Sam's cracks about homosexuals; John is bitter and despondent about his cancer and about his hopeless love for Sally. Chloe, singing, dancing, and chattering, is almost never still (she is a marvellous creation by Miss Baranski) until—toward the end—we learn that she is devastated by her husband's cancer. Sam is ever expansive until he is stilled by the pain of the fight. (Mr. Lane's expansiveness and humanity are like nobody else's.) Mr. Heald, as strong and subtle as ever, conveys John's guilt, misery, and despair, but when the occasion demands is just as funny as everyone else. An explosion from Sally near the end of the play proves, among other things, that Swoosie Kurtz is a star if ever there was one.

I've purposely left out most of the surprises and the jokes. Plenty of both, including a very funny phone conversation with John's children, in which Sally describes the poor drowned swimmer. If Mr. McNally had a single message, I missed it, having been sidetracked by the incomparable performances. The title (awful) refers to some line in the script I've forgotten; I wish Mr. M. had forgotten it, too. John Tillinger directed.

—EDITH OLIVER

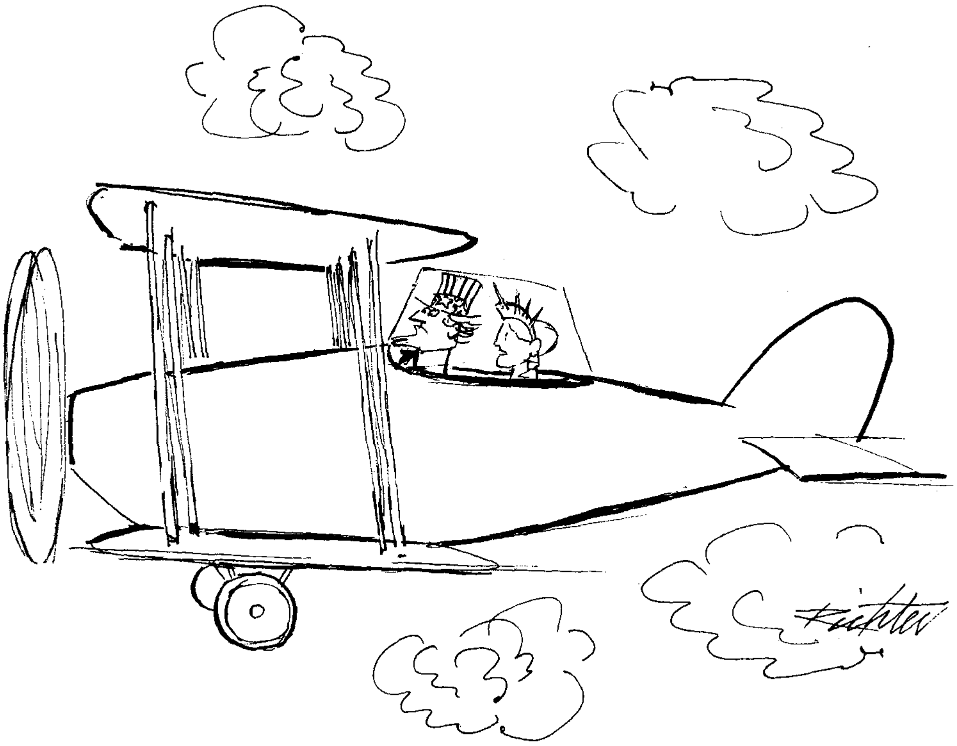
Getting Hitched

YOU can learn a lot about acting Shaw from the production of "Getting Married" that opened last week at the Circle in the Square, directed by Stephen Porter. The revival (if you can call it that; the play was last done in New York in 1951) is substantially better than most of the Shaw we've seen at the Circle in the Square and at the Roundabout in recent years, much of which, of course, Mr. Porter himself has been responsible for. Here he has assembled an ensemble cast of more than usually fine players—actors who for the most part know to avoid the traps most New York actors fail into with Shaw. Chief among these is the tendency to convert Shaw's characters into types they were never meant to be.



Shaw's art resided primarily in the creation of anti-types—creatures whose reason for being is the discrepancy between what they say and what you thought they would say because of how they appear. In "Getting Married," for example, there's a character (played here by Victoria Tennant) who, because of her situation and the position in which society has placed her (not to mention her name, Lesbia), might be described as the very type of the maiden aunt. She doesn't express herself like a maiden aunt, though—more like the Shavian equivalent of a marine. This interest in suggesting the eccentricity below the surface of everyday life is what made Shaw the David Lynch of his day—and what makes him ultimately vulnerable to the same charge of superficiality. That "Getting Married" proves such a delight and seems so profound is due partly to the simplicity of its design. It's the purest possible example of the genre it represents. (Shaw subtitled it, successively, "A Conversation" and "A Disquisitory Play.") In this play absolutely nothing happens; consequently, it gives one an unusually clear idea of how Shaw's drama of ideas was supposed to work on its audience.

The setting—the anteroom of a huge country kitchen (evoked here by James Morgan)—is a place between places, a time between events: the action takes place on the morning of a day when there is supposed to be a wedding. Also present (in addition to Lesbia) are the bride's two uncles—one of whom (Nicolas Coster) very much wants to marry Lesbia, while the other (Simon Jones) is colluding with his young wife (Madeleine Potter) to obtain a divorce for her, so that she can marry



"I say we renounce world leadership and just have fun."

• •

his best friend. One uncle is a soldier, and is therefore able to put forth the military viewpoint; the bride's father (Lee Richardson), a bishop, has for some years been writing a history of marriage; the bride and the groom (Jane Fleiss and J. D. Cullum), having each, independently, called a halt to the proceedings, are locked in their separate rooms perusing pamphlets on the legal pitfalls of the married state. In other words, no character in the play has any function other than to be the mouthpiece for a particular set of ideas about marriage. This is true even of the interlopers: the philosopher-grocer (Patrick Tull) who is catering the wedding; the lawyer Soames (Walter Bobbie), who tries to draw up a contract to everyone's liking; and Mrs. George (Linda Thorson), who we're asked to believe is both the grocer's sister-in-law and the mayoress of the borough. The closest thing the play has to a plot development is the relationships that emerge between Mrs. George and the Bishop, and between Mrs. George and an aggressively snobbish young man (Scott Wentworth) who has fallen in love with her.

Of course, what Shaw was dealing with here was sex, in the only way Victorian drama could: with the figure of the man or woman who conceives an attraction for someone outside his or her own class. Miss Thorson, who is willowy and glamorous and speaks with an Oxbridge accent, is not quite earthy or unaffected enough for us to be able to glean fully what the character of Mrs. George stands for (I suspect that she represents friendship and intellectual passion), but you get an idea of how sexy the play could be from the wooing scenes between her and Mr. Wentworth, which leave one virtually gasping for breath. What Mr. Wentworth has—in company with Miss Tennant, Mr. Jones, Mr. Bobbie, and Mr. Cullum—is a stillness, an ability to do absolutely nothing with his face or voice or body that isn't necessary, so that only the words come through. By contrast, Miss Potter, as Mr. Jones's wife, is not sufficiently comfortable with her role to do it without overdoing it, and is flouncing and pouting and simpering a good deal. Miss Tennant, who knows how to move like a woman who either is wearing a corset or is only one generation away from wearing one, is content to be herself, confident that the schoolmarmish way she moves her hands will contrast meaningfully with the sentiments she expresses. Actually, Miss Potter doesn't need to pout; her mouth forms a natural moue, so that by making funny faces she ends up looking like a stage version of the woman she wants to portray, just as the dress that Holly Hynes has designed for Miss Thorson—too bright and too coarse for the size and shape of the theatre—ends up looking like a stage version of vulgarity.

Mr. Porter, who seems to have left the cast largely to its own devices, hasn't come up with a great production. A great production would have taken more liberties with the text (places where the director could have cut are glaringly obvious), and would have put the interval after the entrance of Mrs. George, when all the other characters have been introduced and everybody is onstage. A great production would have found a means of dealing with some of the work's peculiarities (like the way violence seems to play around the edges of the argument) and would have handled the great set piece—the sequence in which Mrs. George goes into a trance and discourses on the lot of women—so that it didn't *seem* quite so much like a set piece. But certainly Mr. Porter is to be commended for bringing together this cast, of which even those members who aren't quite in their element are a pleasure to watch. As far as New York Shaw goes, this is as good as it gets.

—MIMI KRAMER

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GREAT MOMENTS IN LIFE INSURANCE

[*From the New Jersey Law Journal*]

Johnson only addressed a loss after the expiration of the contestability period and did not undermine the fundamental principle that equitable fraud is available as a ground for rescinding a life-insurance contract after an insured's death—as *Formosa* and *Russ* held, an insurer may rescind a policy within the two-year period from issuance that N.J.S.A. allows for contesting life-insurance contracts if the insured misrepresented facts that would have affected the estimate of the risk and calculation of the premium; N.J.S.A. 17B:24-3(d) did not alter the *Kerpchak* definition of materiality, and the insurer is entitled to rescind the policy here, where the insured (who was found in the trunk of his car shot to death) had knowingly misrepresented that he did not have diabetes.

BOOKS

Voices in the Clock

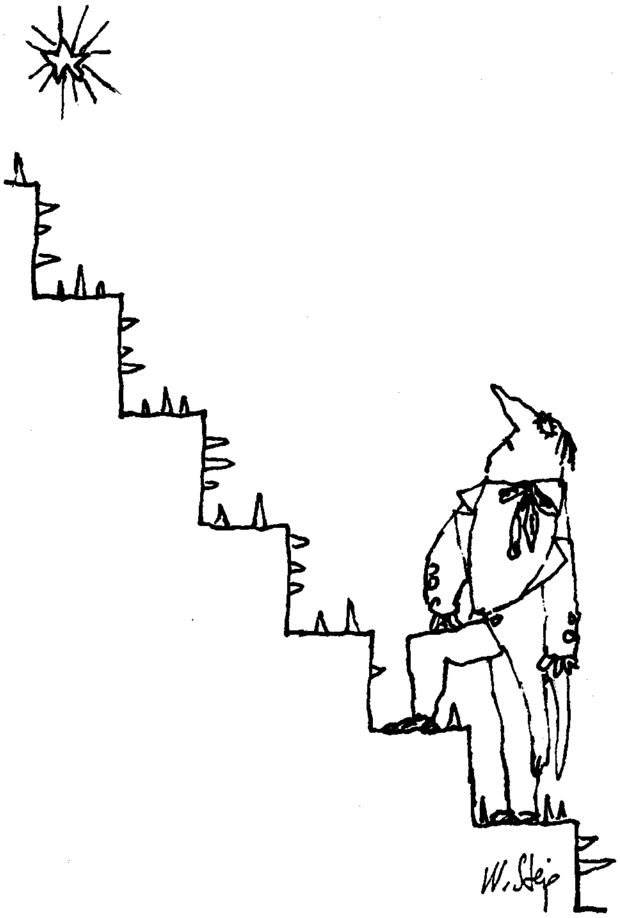
AT first glance, Colin Martindale's "The Clockwork Muse" (Basic Books; $29.95) has the look of a titanic folly. The book comes stuffed with seemingly parodic graphs and tables, in which, for example, the "hedonic value" of an artistic stimulus is charted against its "arousal potential"; the "primordial content" of American song lyrics is matched up with national unemployment figures; and Edgar Allan Poe, Marianne Moore, and I. A. Baraka are incorporated into dots on a set of Cartesian axes that track something called the Composite Variability Index from Revolutionary War days to the present. The last time I encountered a critical study that created a first impression of such imposing absurdity was a couple of years ago, when I chanced upon a scholarly journal whose cover promised to "reinvent" the Marx Brothers. Lest the Wonderland magic of that promise dissolve on a closer inspection, and one of life's little joys be forever lost, I scrupulously left the journal unopened.

It would be a shame if prospective readers were likewise to give "The Clockwork Muse" a miss, for it is a book guaranteed, at the very least, to stir lively rethinking about the essence and the evolution of art. Martindale, a professor of psychology at the University of Maine, is also versed in statistics, and there is something tonic in his urgings on behalf of a criticism of greater lucidity and testability. His aim is nothing less than the unveiling of "universal laws of art history," discoverable only through a "scientific approach to literature and art." The questions he raises go well beyond the individual graphs and tables he offers. At issue, finally, is the role that quantification—the whole business of methodical measurement—can and will play in our evaluations of art. Who is that knocking at the door of the aesthete's salon? Is is the scientist, hoping to get in.

By way of overcoming one's initial skepticism, it may be helpful to place Martindale in the long tradition of English-language critics who have sought to wed aesthetics to scientific methodology. One thinks of Ezra Pound declaring, sixty years ago, that "the proper METHOD for studying poetry and good letters is the method of contemporary biologists." Of Coleridge urging his countrymen, nearly two hundred years ago, to "let a communication be formed between any number of learned men in the various branches of science and literature." And of Dryden observing, more than three hundred years ago, that a person "should be learned in several sciences and should have a reasonable, philosophical, and in some measure a mathematical head, to be a complete and excellent poet." If Martindale's study boasts a technical density greater than any of theirs, if it seems the offspring of a "number cruncher" who has been granted unrestricted computer time—well, ours is a technological, number-crunching age. Martindale might plausibly argue that his recondite statistical techniques—his detrendings and multidimensional scalings and autoregressive equations—are high-precision tools of just the sort his predecessors yearned to employ.

Traditionally, most poets and artists haven't shared this faith in science's capacity for illuminating art; a hostile skepticism appears to have been the general rule. And yet, with each new decade's technological refinements, it has grown increasingly difficult, even in negotiating the mysteries of art, to support George Bernard Shaw's breezy maxim that "science is always wrong." One recalls how, in perhaps the most famous forgery hoax of this century—the string of Vermeers produced by Han van Meegeren in the thirties and forties—a preëminent expert, Abraham Bredius, was so thoroughly taken in as to proclaim one of them "*the* masterpiece of Johannes Vermeer of Delft." He proceeded on what now seems a naïve assumption—that scientific corroboration in such cases is superfluous, since the heart knows best how to distinguish the genuine from the ersatz. Most critics would be warier today. They have seen time and again how even the broadest heart knowledge can collapse before a minuscule but stubborn technical irregularity—chemical traces of aluminum discovered in an Etruscan sculpture, say, or microscopic trailings indicating that a historic document was composed partly with a ballpoint pen.

Martindale addresses the issue of heart knowledge versus machine knowledge—the connoisseur versus the technician—with an engaging feistiness. He seeks to take the connoisseur down a peg or two. Most literary and art critics have operated "on the worst possible level of analysis," he says. "Far too particularistic and caught up in details, they can't see the forest for the trees." He clearly exults both in an awareness that within some critical circles he represents "bad" tech-



The Self as Something to Be Improved

nology (things like the statistician's graphs and tables) rather than "good" technology (things like the word processor) and in the realization that it is the nature of technological advances to efface such distinctions and to impose themselves wherever they prove useful. Given the vast amounts of psychological research now being done into the nature of art and creativity, one might regard "The Clockwork Muse"—a book grounded in the conviction that five or six equations could probably "capture the rich complexity of six hundred fifty years of British poetry"—as an inevitability.

Martindale would doubtless extend this line a little further. He feels confident—justifiably, in my view—that his branch of criticism will redesign the face of literary and art criticism, particularly within the academy. When this might happen would be hard to say, owing to the uncertainties surrounding scientific progress and to the insular nature of much academic criticism (a conservatism often posing as its reverse). But it does seem likely that there will soon arrive a time—ten years? twenty?—when the illuminations emerging from the cognitive scientist's laboratory will throw too much light to let critics ignore them. Pathbreaking revelations will clarify for us how, physiologically, art works its effects on us. One can foresee a time when a new school of criticism, steeped in the intricacies of brain research, will complain, with some grounds, that previous schools adopted the commanding technical nomenclature of hard science while eschewing its rigor.

WHATEVER gripes one may have with Martindale, he's not to be faulted for any lack of rigor. From chapter to chapter he advances systematically and—as soon becomes apparent—indefatigably. Early on, he sets out his theory, which he calls a psychological theory of aesthetic evolution, and begins subjecting it to one complex statistical analysis after another. His book is not large—there are some three hundred and seventy pages of text—but it is built, like a coral atoll whose aggregate mass is all but submerged, upon a mountain of numbers.

The generating postulates of his theory, which he describes as "altogether analogous to Darwin's theory of biological evolution," are simple and reassuringly commonsensical. He proposes that the driving evolutionary force behind all art—from "high" forms, like paintings and poetry, to "low" forms, like pop songs and television commercials—is "habituation," which he defines as "the phenomenon whereby repetitions of a stimulus are accompanied by decreases in physiological reactivity to it." This is a "universal property of all nervous tissue": the laboratory jellyfish that registers diminishing responses to an electrical impulse is in a sense kin to the jaded art collector who thirsts for "fresh blood." Because of the effects of habituation, aspiring artists must do something original if they are to succeed like the artists of the past; this "need for novelty" is a historical constant, goading new generations of would-be creators across the millennia.

According to Martindale, novelty is usually achieved in one of two ways: artists forge a radically new style or, while working in an established style, pursue an ever greater unpredictability ("increasing remoteness or strangeness of similes, metaphors, images, and so on"). This dichotomy is grounded in a Freudian continuum, one end of which is occupied by "primary-process cognition" (where the remote or strange similes, metaphors, images are apt to come from, for it is "free-associative, concrete, irrational and autistic") and the other by "secondary-process cognition" ("abstract, logical and reality-oriented"). In Martindale's scheme of things, secondary-process cognition, which he calls "conceptual thought," comes to the fore during periods of stylistic change; primary-process cognition, which he refers to as "primordial thought," serves as the wellhead of creative illogicality. Over time, artists working within an established style are pushed, by the novelty requirement, into deeper and deeper levels of primordial thought. The mounting effort and cost of these "regressions," in conjunction with the gathering threat of incoherence, eventually gives birth to a sweeping stylistic change, which, by its very newness, eases the need for unpredictability. Of course, the new style will, over time, exact its own deeper and deeper regressions, until it, too, yields to a sweeping stylistic change. The process is not only inevitable but, in the main, punctual—for ours is a clockwork muse.

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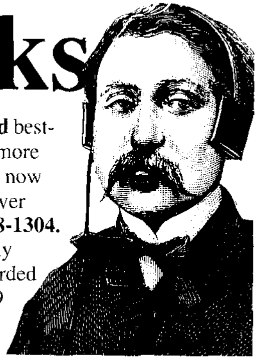

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society and of each other. Each genre contains the gentle curves of its own steady regressions, the steep slopes of its own abrupt stylistic revolutions. Martindale's experiments have convinced him that the best predictor of artistic evolution is art itself. Social conditions matter far less than we might suppose: "The empirical evidence suggests that art tends in fact to evolve in a social vacuum, and that non-evolutionary factors are comparatively negligible. . . . Furthermore, social forces are analogous to *friction*, in that they impede or slow down the progress of an artistic tradition. They do not cause change in art: they distort it."

His views offer interesting links—only sketchily traced, unfortunately—to the New Critics. The New Critical tenet that art can be meaningfully examined outside its historical and social milieu is almost universally discredited in contemporary academic circles, where it is typically regarded as a naïve and sentimental attempt to "purify" art of its coarse, workaday surroundings. But since there's no better way to counter charges of sentimentality than by recourse to the cold world of numbers, Martindale manages to place the debate on a new footing. Could it be that critical attempts to fix a work of art in its historical and social context are almost inherently distortional? And could it be that the truly naïve and sentimental are those who would, through a distaste for the exact sciences, "purify" art of its mathematical underpinnings?

THE value of "The Clockwork Muse" hinges on a couple of points. One must first assume that the primordial / conceptual continuum is indeed central to all artistic creation. One must then accept the more troublesome proposition that the approximate place of an art work on the continuum—the relative proportions of primordial and conceptual thought which went into its composition—can be ascertained by means of Martindale's experiments, many of which consist of questionnaires and surveys administered to "artistically naïve" undergraduates. (More worldly testees apparently bring to their evaluations prejudices that skew the data.) He wishes us to accept his statement that after asking his undergraduates to evaluate an art work in terms familiar to them—whether it is "dreamlike," "meaningless," "tense," "strong," and so forth—he can accurately translate their judgments into numerical placements on his continuum. What the book consists of, in bulk, is a succession of reports on experiments in which he or his colleagues have sought to measure, for a wide diversity of art forms, variations along the continuum over time. (These experiments, it must be said, are recounted with such punctilious regard for procedure that readers may sometimes feel they've stepped out of a literary text and into the world's longest footnote.) Having converted art into numerical data, Martindale can comfortably "cross over" from one medium to another—make comparisons, for instance, between trends toward greater dissonance in classical music and increased abstraction in painting. We are approaching the realization that art history is a "completely deterministic process," ultimately expressible in "mathematical equations embedded in an objective theory."

"The Clockwork Muse" would be an easy book to lambaste. It invites criticism deliberately, both in the grandiose sweep of genres it contemplates (English verse, French painting, pre-Columbian sculpture, Japanese ukiyo-e prints, even New England gravestones) and in its baldly dismissive pronouncements (with the help of "computerized-content analytic methods," he assures us, "one could study the history of a literary tradition without ever reading *any* of the literature"). And it invites criticism unwittingly, through the frequent crudeness of its aesthetic discriminations. One can envision indignant specialists taking it apart piece by piece. Although no specialist, I found that within the area of his survey dearest to me—the evolution of American verse—Martindale misses as much as he gets. He is one of those literary critics (a distressingly familiar breed) who feel an almost theological yearning for some First Cause, in which all uncertainties of influence can be put to rest. He traces virtually everything that has happened in the last hundred and fifty years directly to Emerson, and an unschooled reader might well leave "The Clockwork Muse" convinced that without Emerson's example poems about modern everyday objects—gas stations and movie houses and electric guitars—would never have emerged in this country.

(The teachings of the Romantics, as crystallized in Wordsworth's declaration that poems should be "found in every subject which can interest the human mind," seem to occupy a point outside the plane on which American poetry is to be charted, and so does any awareness that modern poets around the world, for most of whom Emerson is as remote a figure as the anonymous author of "Gilgamesh," have embraced such subject matter as their own.)

Yet particularized carping of this sort is probably off the mark. The gist of the book lies elsewhere—in the laws it seeks to divulge, and in the charts and graphs intended to illustrate and vindicate them. The book solicits, ideally, a tripartite analysis. There is first the issue of whether its statistical methods are, from a technical standpoint, sound and soundly pursued (a matter in which this reader has no expertise). There is then the question of whether what might be called Martindale's digitalizations—his conversion of art works into strings of numbers—make sense intuitively. Do his conclusions accord with our lives? Does he speak to what we experience when we stand before middling art and immortal art and everything in between? Even sympathetic readers will probably feel that Martindale's readings can be alarmingly nuance-free. One certainly wishes that he wouldn't so often seem to invest greater faith in his theories than in common sense, as when he concludes, after examining his data, that the neoclassical poets, like Pope and Dryden, show a greater "arousal potential" (defined largely in terms of "ambiguity, novelty, incongruity") than the Metaphysicals, like Donne and Vaughan and Marvell. Obviously, this is not posterity's judgment, and never has been; over succeeding centuries, it would have seemed absurd to Johnson, Browning, Eliot. In such instances, if Martindale seriously aspires to upend conventional wisdom he will need far more compelling evidence than what he provides. In the meantime, he might keep in mind that when a physicist determines that bees cannot fly is no time for beekeepers to dismantle their apiaries; rather, it's time for the physicist to embark on new theories of aerodynamics.

Thirdly and finally, there is the question of how insightfully Martindale applies his findings to the wider world. How keenly does he perceive—in a book that rather too insistently stresses the need to see the forest rather than just the trees—the broader issues of his research? On this level, his book can be trying. One problem is that he only intermittently acknowledges that many modern artists are themselves familiar with the dichotomies he would investigate, and that this familiarity may imbue their art with complications not immediately apprehensible to his questionnaires. One wonders what his indexes would make of a poem like Auden's "A Lullaby," in which the elderly poet, in effect bifurcating himself into parent and infant, reconceives himself in a baby's body and sings himself to sleep:

> Now you have licence to lie,
> naked, curled like a shrimplet,
> jacent in bed, and enjoy
> its cosy micro-climate:
> *Sing, Big Baby, sing lullay.*

In this queer, haunting poem we find many of the elements of a deep regression—images of dreaming, suckling, fetal curling, and so forth. But the poem is not a retreat into infantilism so much as an elaborate, stylized meditation, by a poet steeped in Freud, on the allurements of such a retreat. Any analysis of the poem, literary or scientific, that fails to note this distinction misses its target. "A Lullaby" might be said to be "about" the sensation of hovering above the very continuum that Martindale would calibrate. "The Clockwork Muse"—like so many critical studies—would profit by a fuller understanding that the artists it scrutinizes are, now and then, at least half as resourceful as their commentators.

"A Lullaby," in its self-consciousness, its deliberate manipulation of the critic's tools and symbols, highlights some of the obstacles that Martindale meets when he ponders the art of our time. His thesis requires that modernism in its various guises be viewed as just another oscillation, a stylistic "bump" along a sort of sine curve. He allows little room for the possibility of any artistic or social climacteric that would irreversibly alter the meaning of art; in his system, the players change but the rules of the game remain fixed. At the outset of his book, he postulates that "people are always and everywhere about the same." Now, this may well be a necessary axiom for a literary statistician (one that legitimates sur-

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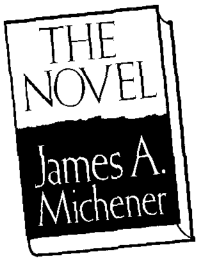

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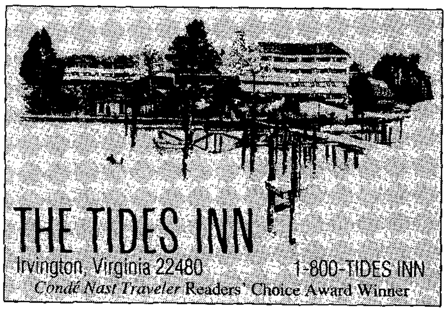

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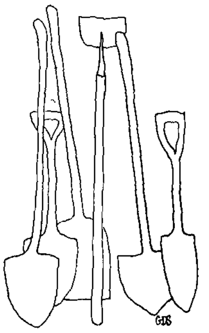
veys in which undergraduates assess the art of the ages). It may even—who knows?—be true. But with this happy assumption Martindale sidesteps all sorts of challenging speculations about radical shifts of outlook—for example, Eliot's hypothesis that the elaborate poetic conceits of the Metaphysicals reveal that in the seventeenth century "a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered." It also ignores the injunctions of many contemporary scholars of non-Western art that any meaningful appreciation of, say, haiku or raga requires a fundamental reëducation. One would have welcomed, at the very least, some brief avowal by Martindale of what, with his adoption of such postulates, he may have forfeited from the start.



As "bumps" go, modernism surely offers some arresting irregularities. If it represents but one more swing of the pendulum, why is it so stubbornly resisted by the general populace? Wordsworth and the Romantics may well have been as revolutionary in their century as Eliot and the moderns have been in ours, but you would never know it from your local newspaper's Poet's Corner or a Hallmark greeting card. These would sound, if they only could, like Wordsworth in the "Lucy" poems, and not like Eliot or Pound or Moore, although these three are figures we've been acquainted with for three-quarters of a century. The moderns remain oddly undomesticated. Similarly, the average Sunday painter is closer to Monet and Renoir than to Picasso and Braque, and the average film score closer to Tchaikovsky and Dvořák than to Schoenberg and Webern. Martindale has little patience with any talk of the Zeitgeist, which he regards as an unprofitably nebulous term, but there is a striking collectivity, to say the least, in the public's longstanding rejection of so many facets of modernism. The resulting schism between artist and public strongly suggests that we may have entered a new terrain—one where the surveyor's usual tools are suddenly inappropriate.

Martindale's own data hint at this in places. One of the most impressive aspects of his book involves studies of "word replacement," where he has repeatedly and painstakingly calculated the percentage of vocabulary abandoned in the transition from one poetic period to another. For readers like me, who have lingering qualms about the applicability of many of his questionnaires, there is a pleasing firmness about this simple tabulation; one needn't worry here (as one must when queries about an art work's "dreamlike" or "meaningless" or "strong" characteristics are slotted into some primordial/conceptual continuum) about whether things "fit." Common sense tells us that great stylistic revolutions will produce high word-replacement indexes, and that is what Martindale's data in fact indicate. Common sense also tells us that since it isn't possible to replace more than every word in one's poetic lexicon the index theoretically has a ceiling of a hundred per cent, and that the natural self-preservation of language over time, which permits us to read Chaucer with no great effort, insures that the theoretical ceiling will never be closely approached. At this juncture, however, common sense and the word-replacement index part ways. Martindale's data suggest that in the next century we will enter an era in which the index will rocket above a hundred per cent. Evidently, modern poets have slipped so many new words into their verses, and scuttled so many old ones, that any extrapolations into the future catapult us into the realm of the nonsensical.

IN theory, some comfort is to be had in Martindale's defining metaphor of the clock. Into an artistic realm that often feels overstretched—one that must encompass everything from the music of John Cage's "4' 33" " (four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence) to the paintings of Yves Klein (canvases produced by rolling naked, paint-smeared bodies over them)—he brings a vision of process and regimentation. He reassures us that the disruptions of our time were to be expected—indeed, that the precise degree of their extravagance might have been foreseen. (There is even a sort of cynical solace in the thought that our country's most television-stunted youth, those who are all but untouched by any heritage of great painting, music, and literature, may in a sense become cultural navigators by providing usefully unschooled evaluations in Martindale's experiments.) But such reassurances do not take us very far. I suspect that most readers will come away from "The Clockwork Muse" slightly depressed by the thought that Martindale—the truth or falsity of his constructions aside—would substitute one vision of confinement for another. His book stands in opposition to the ever-expanding shelf of academic criticism dedicated to the proposition that the Zeitgeist is inescapable, and that the artist's occasional sensation of "release" from the bounds of racial or sexual identity, from the era's enveloping political, social, religious, or sexual attitudes, is illusory. (Ironically, the same academies simultaneously issue volume after volume bent on censuring dead artists for succumbing to the benightedness of their age, as when Shakespeare is blasted for slighting women or Swift for believing in a natural social hierarchy.) But in Martindale's universe, too, an artist's progress and development are typically shaped by external rules that he or she is unaware of. Either way, whether subservient to the Zeitgeist or to a psychological theory of aesthetic evolution, the artist is a tethered individual, rarely ranging far from, respectively, the social or the statistical norm.

And what of those bleak, masterly novels, stories, poems, paintings of our age which erupt from an aggrieved sense of the artist's essential apartness? Are their cries, when attended to over a sufficient critical distance, revealed as nothing but the internal grindings of a clockwork mechanism? Perhaps—and yet, if so, one must expect the artists enclosed within it to greet this discovery only as cause for fiercer crying.

—Brad Leithauser

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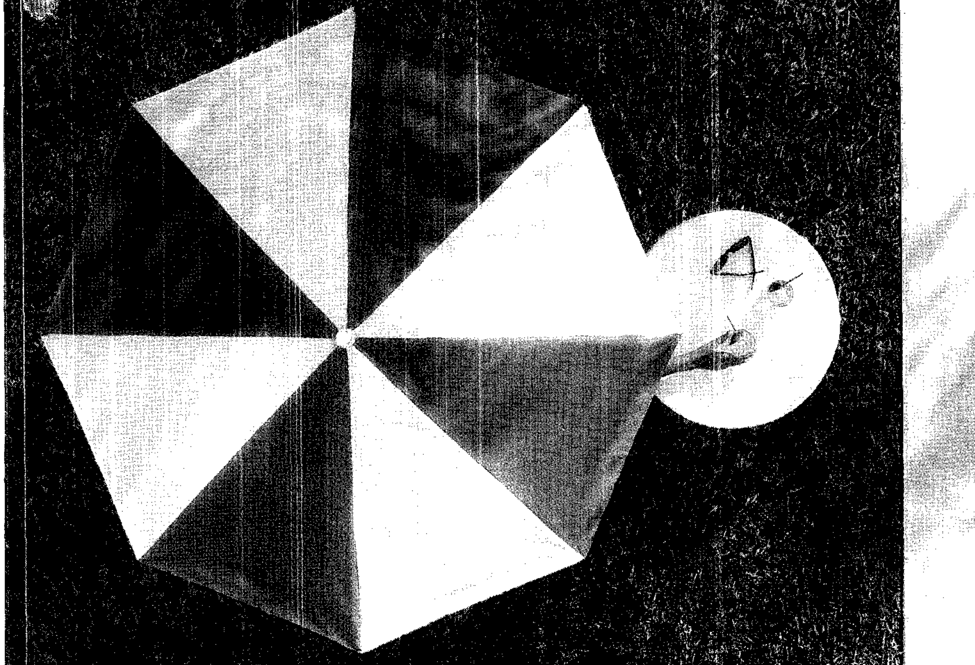
Stone Horse Cheesecake

INGREDIENTS

16	ounces cream cheese, softenenedls 1 10
1	cup sugarls 1 10
1	Tblsp. vanillals 1 10
16	ounces sour creamls 1 10
1	cup ricotta cheesels 1 10
2	Tblsp. lemon juicels 1 10
1	tsp. cornstarchls 1 10
1/2	tsp. saltls 1 10
3	eggsls 1 10

—*Stamford Advocate & Greenwich Time.*

Sounds more like Stoned Horse Cheesecake to us.



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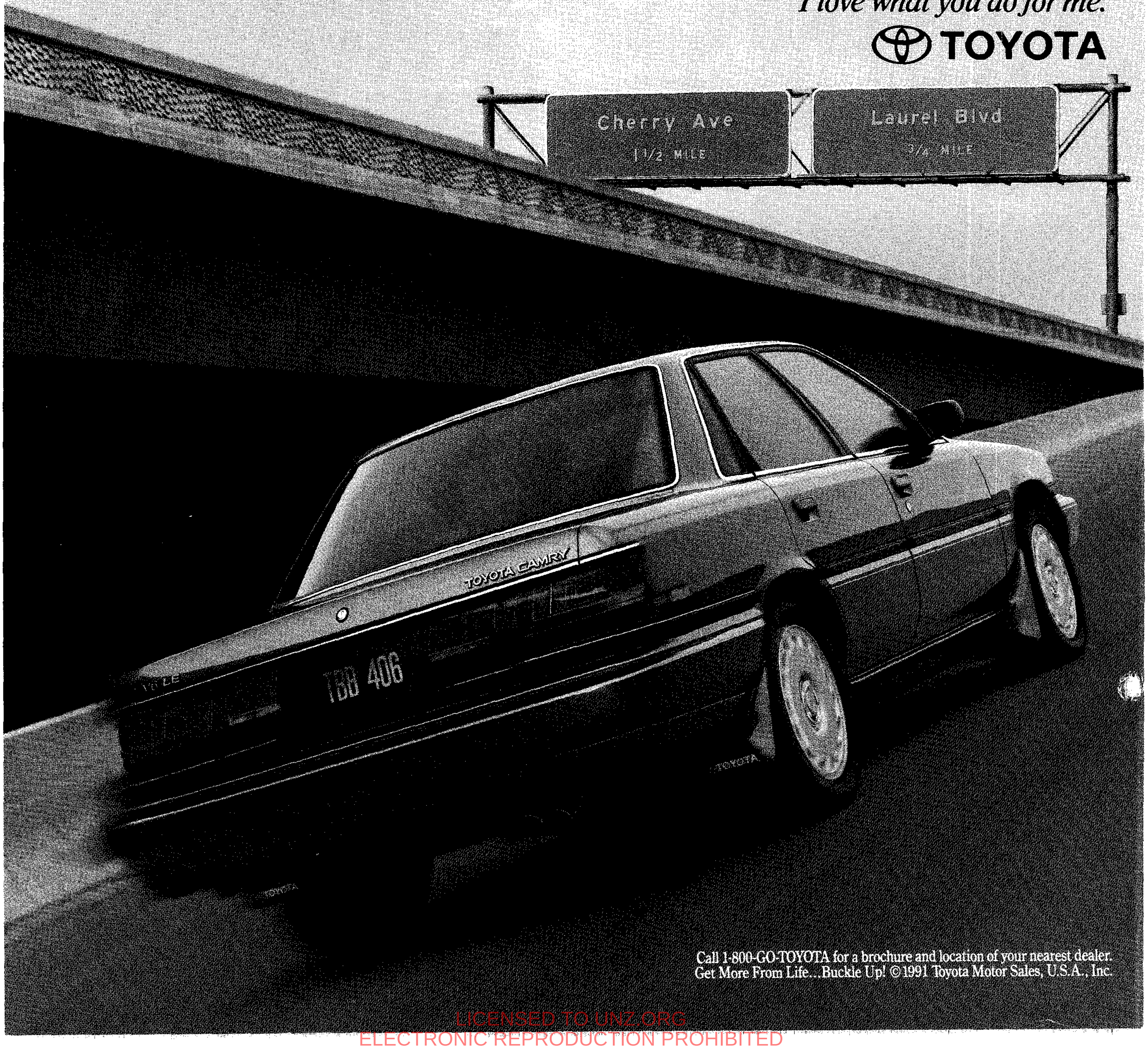

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